

# NEW HORIZONS FOR CHRISTIAN UNITY



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**A Textbook for Adult Discussion-Action Groups**

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New Horizons Series of Textbooks for Adult Discussion-Action Groups

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# NEW HORIZONS FOR CHRISTIAN UNITY

A Commentary on Vatican II's *Decree on Ecumenism*

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To  
Joseph Cardinal Ritter  
*Archbishop of St. Louis*  
*Apostle of Christian Unity*

this book is dedicated with esteem and gratitude.

FATHER O'BRIEN

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UNITY is the condition of truth. Man in his human condition — existentially — often separates himself from truth by building a wall (enclosed circles on front cover) of false ideals, prejudices, ignorance, etc. around himself. It is only by being open (open circles on front and back covers) and communicating with others (overlapping circles containing figures in dialogue) whose background and ideals may differ from ours that one achieves truth and thus CHRISTIAN UNITY with the Triune God through Christ (circle with cross) and with all the people of God.

#### SUGGESTED ORDER OF MEETING FOR A DISCUSSION-ACTION GROUP

1. Opening, with prayer.
2. Roll call.
3. Brief review of previous meeting by the secretary.
4. Report on questions referred to spiritual director.
5. Reading and discussion of current assignment.
6. Assignment of next lesson.
7. Announcement of time and place of next meeting.
8. Adjournment, with prayer.

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# THE ADULT DISCUSSION-ACTION GROUP

1. The purpose of a discussion-action group is to help its members to gain a better understanding of their religion, to develop facility in presenting the Christian message to others, and to put religious truths into practice in daily living.
2. A group is ideally made up of a leader, a secretary, and four to ten additional members under the guidance of a spiritual director.
3. The spiritual director encourages the members in their study, attends meetings occasionally, and provides answers to questions submitted to him by the secretary.
4. The leader, who is also a learner, asks individual members to read passages of the text aloud while the others follow silently, and then guides the discussion with the help of aids given in the textbook.
5. The secretary calls the roll, keeps a brief record of each meeting, and refers to the spiritual director questions that cannot be answered within the group.
6. A suitable textbook should be selected for the group. Each member should obtain a copy and bring it to the meetings.
7. Meetings should be held weekly, whenever and wherever it is most convenient for the members to assemble. They should not ordinarily be prolonged beyond an hour and a half.
8. Books, articles, and pictures that pertain to the subject being discussed should be brought to the attention of the group.
9. The references listed at the back of the textbook are for the benefit of those who wish to do further reading on the topics treated in the textbook.
10. At the end of the course of study and discussion it may be well to arrange a day of recollection for all who have taken part in the program.

# INTRODUCTION

The ecumenical movement has created a new climate of understanding, friendship and warmth between Christians which is unprecedented since the great religious upheaval of the sixteenth century. Further impetus to the movement for Christian unity was given by the action of Pope John XXIII in convoking Vatican Council II and in inviting Protestant and Eastern Orthodox Churches to send observers. Pope Paul VI has continued the ecumenical policy and, at its third session in November, 1964, Vatican Council II issued the *Decree on Ecumenism*.

One of the most important enactments of the Council, this decree sets forth the basic principles underlying this movement and calls upon all Catholics to participate in it. Its great objective is the fulfillment of the prayer uttered by Christ at the Last Supper "that all may be one, even as thou, Father, in me and I in thee."

The great merit of *New Horizons for Christian Unity* is that it explains in clear simple language each of the 24 articles of the *Decree on Ecumenism* and shows how they can be put into practice. It thus vastly increases the fruitfulness of the decree. Whether read by an individual or used as a textbook for adult discussion and action groups, it will prove of immense help and guidance.

Father John A. O'Brien brings an unusually rich background to the discussion of this decree and of the ecumenical movement. For a decade he served as Catholic co-chairman of the commission on interreligious activity of the National Conference of Christians and Jews. Through his articles and books he has brought the exciting news of the first fruits of the unity movement to very many readers.

Through his editorship of the widely quoted *Steps to Christian Unity*, featuring noted Protestant and Catholic theologians and biblical scholars, great numbers have been drawn into active participation in this providential movement.

*New Horizons for Christian Unity* will provide guidance, light and help to all Christians who wish to see Christ's prayer fulfilled. Equipped with questions for discussion, prepared by Monsignor Leon A. McNeill, a veteran expert in this field, this little book will do immense good and merits a wide readership.

† JOSEPH CARDINAL RITTER  
*Archbishop of St. Louis*

June 5, 1966  
*Feast of the Most Holy Trinity*

## PRAYERS BEFORE MEETINGS

*Leader:* In the Name of the Father ✠ and of the Son, etc.  
Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of Thy faithful and kindle in them the fire of Thy love.  
Send forth Thy Spirit and they shall be created;

*All:* And Thou shalt renew the face of the earth.

*Leader:* Let us pray.

*All:* O God, Who hast taught the hearts of the faithful by the light of the Holy Spirit, grant us in the same Spirit to be truly wise, and ever to rejoice in His consolation. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

*Leader:* Immaculate Mother of God,

*All:* Pray for us.

*Leader:* Prayer in honor of Saint Pius X:

*All:* O Jesus, Divine Teacher, Who filled the soul of Saint Pius with zeal to feed Thy little ones with the bread of truth, and wert pleased when he revived the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine to dispel the darkness of ignorance of divine things: grant, we pray, that we may be inflamed with desire to teach others and to prepare well by prayer and study. May the teaching apostolate, O Lord, through the intercession of Saint Pius, Pope and catechist, be extended and intensified throughout the Universal Church. Amen. In the Name of the Father ✠ and of the Son, etc.

## PRAYERS AFTER MEETINGS

*Leader:* In the Name of the Father ✠ and of the Son, etc.  
To Thee be praise, to Thee be glory, to Thee be thanksgiving, forever and ever, O Blessed Trinity!

*All:* Amen.

*Leader:* Praised be Jesus Christ!

*All:* Forever and ever. Amen.

*Leader:* Let us pray.

*All:* O God, Who desirest that all should come to the knowledge of the truth and be saved, grant us the grace to make Thee known, and to devote ourselves to Thy love in the service of the souls whom Thou hast redeemed. Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

*Leader:* Let us pray for our benefactors.

*All:* Deign, O Lord, for Thy Name's sake, to reward with eternal life all those who have promoted the work of the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine.

*Leader:* Let us pray for the faithful departed.

*All:* Eternal rest give unto them, O Lord, and let perpetual light shine upon them.

*Leader:* May they rest in peace.

*All:* Amen. In the Name of the Father ✠ and of the Son, etc.

# UNIT I

## Chapters I through VIII



# I GROWTH OF ECUMENICAL MOVEMENT

The Second Vatican Council had two main objectives: 1. the *aggiornamento* or updating of the Church's doctrines and pastoral ministry and the deepening of the spiritual life of her members; 2. the promotion of Christian unity so as to fulfill the command of Christ that all who believe in him should form one Church. The effort of all Christians to achieve such unity is called ecumenism or the ecumenical movement. Such is the theme of this booklet. Our guide throughout this study will be the *Decree on Ecumenism* — hereafter referred to as DE — by the Second Vatican Council, supplemented by holy Scripture and statements of the popes and the Council Fathers.

1. What does the expression "the updating of the Church's doctrines and pastoral ministry" mean to you? 2. What evidence have you seen that both Catholics and our separated brethren are sincerely bent on promoting Christian unity?

"THAT THEY ALL MAY BE ONE." In this first chapter we shall sketch briefly the growth of the ecumenical movement, the chief inspiration for which is two utterances of Christ. The first is: "I am the good shepherd, and I know mine and mine know me, even as the Father knows me and I know the Father; and I lay down my life for my sheep. And other sheep I have that are not of this fold. Them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice, and there shall be one fold and one shepherd" (Jn 10:14-16).

Of such supreme importance was the unity of his followers that our Lord returns to this theme on the night before his death. After imploring the Father to sanctify his disciples in the truth, Jesus prays: "Yet not for these only do I pray, but for those also who through their word are to believe in me, that all may be one, even as thou, Father, in me and I in thee; that they also may be one in us, that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. And the glory that thou hast given me, I have given to them, that they may be one, even as we are one: I in them and thou

in me; that they may be perfected in unity, and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and that thou hast loved them even as thou hast loved me" (Jn 17:20-23).

Among the most earnest and impressive words that ever fell from the Savior's lips, they are being proclaimed today, as they have been for centuries, from every Christian pulpit. They are woven into the consciousness of every Christian and are an inescapable part of the message of every herald of the gospel. Christ's insistence upon the necessity of unity of faith among his followers is echoed by St. Paul: "I therefore, the prisoner in the Lord, exhort you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you were called, with all humility and meekness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, careful to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace: one body and one Spirit, even as you were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is above all, and throughout all, and in us all" (Eph 4:1-6).

*1. In what sense may all men be said to belong to the "good shepherd" even though they are not yet of the "one fold"? 2. Why does Our Lord so earnestly desire that all who believe in him "may be one"? 3. Comment briefly on some of the bonds of Christian unity mentioned by St. Paul in the above passage from Ephesians.*

THE SCANDAL OF CHRISTENDOM. Such then is the teaching of Jesus which provides the *incentive* and the *motive power* for the ecumenical movement. This teaching haunts the consciences of all Christians and especially of their spiritual shepherds. It causes both shepherd and flock to writhe in pain as they look at the appalling disunity of Christians, which Dr. Peter Ainslee, a Protestant minister in Baltimore, long ago called the "scandal of Christendom." Evidence that most Christians are aware that the present disunity is contrary to Christ's plan is cited by Hartzell Spence. In gathering material for a book on the different religions in the U.S.A., he spent three years and traveled over 200 thousand miles. He talked with people of different faiths and in all walks of life. He reports that the question most frequently put to him was in substance: "Do you think that there is any likelihood of the Christian Churches reuniting into one great Church, and thus freeing themselves from the bewildering variety of denominations and sects which now exist?"

An individual who has lost a leg, arm or hand not infrequently experiences sensations in the nerves at the end of the severed limb, which he feels as though they were coming from the lost member. So the corporate mind of the Christian people experiences sensations of painful regret, which seem to emanate from the lost members of their body — the fragmented body of Christ. Non-theological factors often played a large, if not the major, role in severing unity. This was true in the Western Schism, in the Eastern Schism, and in the great upheaval and fragmentation of Christendom in the sixteenth century.

*1. How deeply do you think Christians in general feel the present disunity of those who profess to believe in Christ? 2. In your opinion,*

*which are more influential in perpetuating the disunity of Christians, differences of doctrine or non-theological factors?*

#### BEGINNINGS OF THE MODERN ECUMENICAL MOVEMENT.

This movement sprung from the concern of Protestant leaders, dismayed at the spectacle of more than 350 denominations, to heal the many wounds of Christendom. The meeting of the World Missionary Conference at Edinburgh in 1910 is generally regarded as the starting point. This was followed by the Conference on Work and Life at Stockholm in 1925 and by the Conference on Faith and Order at Lausanne in 1927. At Amsterdam in 1948 a giant step was taken in the establishment of the World Council of Churches: a loose federation that includes slightly over 200 Protestant and Orthodox bodies in some 50 countries, representing about 300 million members. A resonant sounding board of Protestant opinion, the World Council of Churches has sponsored extensive studies of the nature of church unity and means to attain it. At the Evanston assembly in 1954, the Committee on Faith and Order submitted a special report entitled "Our Oneness in Christ and Our Disunity as Churches."

The report stressed the following points: 1. The present evident reality among the Churches is disunity, which is an inevitable consequence of the depravity of human nature. 2. Nevertheless, the Christian Churches may be said to have unity because their head, Christ, is one. This unity, though now invisible, will be made manifest by Christ at the time of his second coming. 3. Repentance and submission to the guidance of the Holy Spirit through sacred Scripture were urged upon the Churches in pursuit of visible unity. The report made by the Faith and Order Conference at Oberlin three years later presented no definite concept of the nature of Christian unity. It declared, however, that Protestant unity of spirit is seeking organizational expression in a fellowship of good works and inter-communion rather than in unity of belief, worship, and structure.

*1. What do you think our attitude should be toward Protestant efforts to achieve Christian unity? 2. Discuss the three points stressed in the special report of the Committee on Faith and Order at the Evanston assembly in 1954.*

**RESULTS OF PROTESTANT ECUMENICAL EFFORTS.** The net results of Protestant ecumenical efforts from the first meeting at Edinburgh in 1910 to the Third Assembly of the World Council of Churches in New Delhi in 1961 may be summarized as follows: 1. On the basis of such common denominators as belief in sacred Scripture, the rites of baptism and the Lord's Supper, the operations of the ministry and the fellowship of good works, some progress in mutual relations has been achieved. 2. Ecumenical efforts have led to the establishment of the World Council of Churches, other councils in different countries, and a number of agencies (more than 20 in the U.S.A.) having ecumenical connections, purposes, and activities. 3. They have achieved the merger of some Christian bodies, encouraged practices of intercommunion, and secured some cooperation among various denominations but no essential unity.

Eager to get things done and to see tangible results, Americans are apt to think that ecumenical efforts have yielded rather meager results. It must be remembered, however, that some of these differences in doctrine and in policy stem from shortly after the Reformation, and others are also of long standing. Nevertheless, the last few decades have witnessed the merger of about a score of denominations in this country, and other still larger mergers are now pending. The proponents of such mergers point out that the present wasteful duplication of church structures and organizational machinery and personnel mean that church expenditures are multiplied about tenfold.

*1. Comment on tangible results of Protestant efforts at Christian unity in modern times. 2. Why is it unreasonable to expect that the reunion of Christendom can be achieved either easily or quickly?*

**SOME PROBLEMS THAT ARISE FROM DISUNITY OF CHRISTIANS.** Leaders of American Protestantism are virtually unanimous in decrying the mushrooming of denominational Churches in areas where one or two would amply suffice. Dr. Martin E. Marty, associate editor of the *Christian Century*, expresses the prevailing viewpoint when he says: "In competitive denominationalism there is little that is legitimate: by its nature self-serving and self-seeking, the approach to church life which models itself on a 'free enterprise' business motif necessarily amounts to 'presenting ourselves' and not Jesus Christ."

Another powerful factor which has stimulated the efforts of Protestants to achieve unity is the magnitude of the problems confronting their missionaries in foreign lands. The natives are often bewildered and confused at the spectacle of missionaries all claiming to preach the religion of Christ while they differ so widely as to what its doctrines are. The divided and conflicting character of such Christianity is so apparent even to the primitive peoples of New Guinea that they recently requested its competing emissaries to stay out. "The excannibals of the world," commented British Congregational minister Cecil Northcott, "are teaching us a Christian lesson: can we not cease to be *cannibals* among ourselves? Instead of eating together at the common table, we tend to eat one another in a kind of blasphemous competition."

*1. Why is the mushrooming of denominational Churches so deplorable? 2. If you were a pagan in a mission land, how do you think you would react to concrete evidences of Christian disunity?*

**"FOSTERED BY THE GRACE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT."** Referring to the widespread efforts for Christian unity, the Second Vatican Council declared: "Everywhere large numbers have felt the impulse of this grace, and among our separated brethren also there increases from day to day the movement, fostered by the grace of the Holy Spirit, for the restoration of unity among all Christians. This movement toward unity is called 'ecumenical.' Those belong to it who invoke the Triune God and confess Jesus as Lord and Savior, doing this not merely as individuals but also as corporate bodies. For almost everyone regards the

body in which he has heard the gospel as his Church and indeed God's Church. All however, though in different ways, long for the one visible Church of God, a Church truly universal and sent forth into the world that the world may be converted to the gospel and so be saved, to the glory of God" (DE 1).<sup>1</sup>

*1. What evidence do we have that the Fathers of Vatican II were most understanding and sympathetic in their appraisal of the Protestant ecumenical movement?*

### SOME THINGS TO DO

1. Read thoughtfully the Introduction and Chapter I of the *Decree on Ecumenism* and discuss them with someone, preferably a non-Catholic.
2. Say a prayer each day that all who believe in Christ may be united in one fold under the one shepherd.

## II CATHOLICS BEGIN UNITY MOVEMENT

The movement for unity among Protestants developed for several decades outside the mainstream of Catholic interest. In the Catholic Church, embracing members in all the countries of the world, there is unity in faith, in worship, and in the acknowledgment of the same supreme spiritual authority. Nevertheless, Catholic leaders could not look out at a divided Christendom without realizing that this is contrary to God's plan and to the express wish of Christ for unity among all his followers. Here is the cause of the gnawing pain in the mystical body of Christ. During World War II Catholic priests and Lutheran ministers, sharing the same cells in Nazi prisons and concentration camps, found themselves praying to the same Lord and finding in him their comfort and strength. They were reading the same Scriptures and frequently saying the same prayers. In the ordeal of war, imprisonment, and suffering they came to realize how much they have in common and the stark tragedy of the circumstances that divide them.

---

1. DECREE ON ECUMENISM, Article 1.

*1. What difference, if any, is there between the unity that prevails in the Catholic Church and the unity for which Christ prayed at the Last Supper?*

**GROWTH IN MUTUAL RESPECT AND ESTEEM.** A new friendliness and warmth marked the relations between Catholics and non-Catholics after the war. The *Una Sancta* (One Holy) movement in Germany fostered that friendship and promoted a dialogue, through which they have found increasing ways to cooperate and to grow in mutual respect and esteem. The dynamism of the movement is confidence in the power of Christ to transform many into one, the same Christ who transformed water into wine at the wedding feast of Cana in Galilee. With the warm approval of Pope Pius XII, headquarters for a similar movement, *Unitas*, were established in Rome under the leadership of Father Charles Boyer, S.J., an ecumenical scholar of international reputation. In Belgium, Holland, Switzerland, and France discussions between Protestant and Catholic scholars concerning possibilities of unity have been taking place with increasing frequency.

In 1916 the Octave for Christian Unity from January 18 to 25, which originated in the United States in 1908, was extended to the universal Church. During that time Catholics, and our separated brethren also, are encouraged to pray earnestly for the unity of all the followers of Christ. The acknowledgment of our own guilt in hindering such unity by our worldliness, disedifying example, pride, and lack of charity are mirrored in the following words of the litany recited during that octave, especially in the churches of Europe: "For controversies marked by irony, suspicion and exaggeration, for lack of understanding, for unfeeling judgment concerning our non-Catholic brethren. Forgive us, O Lord. For the acts of violence and the injustices we have tolerated in the course of history against our Protestant brethren. Forgive us, O Lord. For proud complacent attitudes shown in times past towards our Orthodox brethren, and for our present indifference to them. Forgive us, O Lord."

*1. How should ecumenical dialogue be carried on in order that it may foster growth "in mutual respect and esteem"? 2. Why and to what extent do Catholics also bear some burden of guilt for the disunity that has long prevailed among Christians?*

**VATICAN II AND CHRISTIAN UNITY.** It was not until 1959, however, that the movement for the unity of all Christians took on new stature, importance, and meaning. On January 25 of that year a 77-year-old pope, who had been elected less than three months before — many thought as merely an interim pontiff — astonished the world by announcing that he would convoke an Ecumenical Council, one of whose chief purposes would be the advancement of Christian unity. The pope implemented his announcement by setting up a Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity, and inviting Protestant and Orthodox officials to be present at the Council as observers. This caught the imagination of the world. After almost four years of careful preparation, Vatican Council

II opened on October 11, 1962. More than half a million people packed St. Peter's Square to watch over 2500 prelates from all countries march into St. Peter's Basilica for the inaugural session. Two days later, at a special audience for the delegate-observers and guests, representing 17 Orthodox and Protestant Churches, Pope John said: "There burns in my heart the intention of working and suffering to hasten the hour when for all men the prayer of Jesus at the Last Supper (for unity) will have reached its fulfillment."

The pope's unfailing kindness, gentleness, humility, warmth, and spontaneity won the hearts of all. The most privileged of all attending the Council, the non-Roman Catholic delegates and guests, were given choice seats and provided with all the documents used in the discussions. They alone were provided with interpreters, who translated into their respective languages the talks of the Council Fathers. They mingled freely at the coffee bar with the bishops, cardinals, and theological and scriptural consultants, with all of whom they discussed the matters treated in the Council. Their opinions were not only welcomed but also solicited, so that they quite rightly felt that they were not mere passive onlookers but actual, though indirect, participants in the deliberations. The Council Fathers took cognizance of their presence and not a few in their talks saluted them as *carissimi observatores* — dearest observers. The observers felt that their opinions and views were being considered by the Council Fathers and were not without influence in affecting the decisions.

*1. How did the world react to Pope John's announcement of an Ecumenical Council which would have as one of its objectives the promotion of Christian unity? 2. What, in your opinion, was the general effect of the participation of non-Roman Catholic observers in Vatican II?*

**NEW LIFE AND VIGOR FOR THE ECUMENICAL MOVEMENT.** Pope John and his Unity Council, as it has come to be called, were thus the factors which galvanized the ecumenical movement into new life and vigor. They lifted the movement off the launching pad, held it before the eyes of the world, and then got it clicking in practically every country. Pope Paul continued the same policy and program as his predecessor. Indeed, his trip to the Holy Land, where he met some of the Orthodox leaders and discussed in a warm and friendly manner the possibility of further steps to Christian unity, added a new dimension of depth to the movement. Not only all Christians but all men and women who esteem peace and concord saw in it the harbinger of better things to come.

The primary purpose of ecumenical dialogue is not conversion but understanding of each other's beliefs, organizational structure, ministry of the word, and forms of worship. Neither side asks the other to sacrifice an essential principle in seeking to achieve this understanding in truth, justice, and charity. The ultimate end of the ecumenical movement is a real union of Christians according to the will of God. This means the acceptance of all the truths of divine revelation, since any other type of

unity would be one in name only. When true unity can be established is beyond the power of man to predict, since it requires the assistance and guidance of the Holy Spirit, and hence is the secret of God himself. On the part of Christians it demands patience, understanding, sympathy, magnanimity, courage, resourcefulness in working out new approaches, and unfailing prayer.

*1. What evidence have you observed in late years of "new life and vigor" in the movement for Christian unity? 2. How would you describe the primary purpose of ecumenical dialogue?*

**THE WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.** The unity which characterizes the Catholic Church is the work of the Holy Spirit. "It is the Holy Spirit," points out the Council, "dwelling in those who believe and pervading and ruling the Church as a whole, who brings about that wonderful communion of the faithful. He brings them into intimate union with Christ, so that he is the principle of the Church's unity. The distribution of graces and offices in his work too, enriching the Church of Jesus Christ with different functions 'in order to equip the saints for the work of service, so as to build up the body of Christ'" (Eph 4:12; DE 2).

Such too is the explicit teaching of St. Paul who tells the Corinthians: "Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit, and there are varieties of ministries, but the same Lord; and there are varieties of workings, but the same God, who works all things in all. Now the manifestation of the Spirit is given to everyone for profit. To one through the Spirit is given the utterance of wisdom; and to another the utterance of knowledge, according to the same Spirit; to another faith, in the same Spirit; to another the gift of healing, in the one Spirit; to another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another the distinguishing of spirits; to another various kinds of tongues; to another interpretation of tongues. *But all these things are the work of one and the same Spirit, who divides to everyone according as he will*" (1 Cor 12:4-11).

It is to be noted that *Spirit, Lord, God*, terms used to designate God in the Old Testament, are applied in the New to the Holy Spirit, the Son, and the Father respectively, as distinct Persons with one divine nature. So keenly conscious was St. Paul that the unity of the faithful was due to the grace of God that he again stresses this truth in his letter to the Galatians: "For all you who have been baptized into Christ, have put on Christ . . . For you are all one in Christ Jesus" (3:27-28).

*1. How should Christians use the varying spiritual gifts and ministries with which the Holy Spirit enriches the Church of Jesus Christ? 2. Why do you think the Holy Spirit endows members of the Church with such a variety of gifts and ministries? 3. Discuss how all of us are by baptism "one in Christ Jesus."*

**OUR BROTHERS IN CHRIST.** To the Catholic Church Christ entrusted the commission to proclaim his gospel to the whole world. "Go, therefore," he said to the disciples, "and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the



Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you; and behold, I am with you all days, even unto the consummation of the world" (Mt 28:19-20). Because of that divine commission the Church is necessarily committed to the ecumenical movement. From the day when she received that commission she has been busily engaged in bringing the fullness of divine revelation to all men.

Furthermore, all baptized persons, whether they belong to the visible unity of the Church or not, have a basic or radical relationship of some kind to Christ and therefore to the Church founded by him. Through baptism they have become children of the same Father. Hence they are our brothers and sisters in Christ, and we must love them as such. Conscious of the numerous divisions among them, our separated brethren — as Pope John fondly called them and always with the emphasis upon *brethren* — are manifesting an increasing realization of the need for some central body or voice to speak for all with some authority. Their closest approximation to it now is the World Council of Churches, but the Council does not have such authority, is not a Church by nature, and membership in it does not require recognition of the "Church" nature of any other member. Hence this urgent need remains at present unappeased.

*1. Why is the Church necessarily committed to striving to bring about the unity of all men in Christ? 2. What should be some of the effects of our looking upon all the baptized as truly our brothers and sisters in Christ?*

#### SOME THINGS TO DO

1. Make a sincere effort to imitate Pope John's "unfailing kindness, gentleness, humility, warmth, and spontaneity" in all your dealings with non-Catholics.
2. If there are any approved ecumenical projects in your community, try in whatever way you can to encourage them and to become involved in them.

# III

## POSITION OF SEPARATED CHURCHES

**T**he Second Vatican Council stresses the hierarchical nature of the Church and the important role played by the papacy in preserving its unity. "Jesus Christ, then, willed that the apostles and their successors — the bishops with Peter's successor at their head — should preach the gospel faithfully, administer the sacraments, and rule the Church in love. It is thus, under the action of the Holy Spirit, that Christ wills his people to increase, and he perfects his people's fellowship in unity: in their confessing the one faith, celebrating divine worship in common, and keeping the fraternal harmony of the family of God" (DE 2). Thus the Church, God's united flock, is like a standard lifted high for the nations to see, as it makes its pilgrim way in hope towards the heavenly fatherland.

"This," declares the Council, "is the sacred mystery of the unity of the Church, in Christ and through Christ, the Holy Spirit energizing its various functions. It is a mystery that finds its highest exemplar and source in the unity of the Persons of the Trinity: the Father and the Son in the Holy Spirit, one God" (DE 2). From the earliest times dissensions broke out, but the Church always strove to quell them and restore unity. Warning against dissension, the Apostle Paul wrote to the Corinthians: "I do not commend you in that you meet not for the better but for the worse. For first of all I hear that when you meet in church there are divisions among you" (1 Cor 11:17-18).

*1. How are the members of the Church perfected in unity? 2. How can one reconcile the many divisions in Christian ranks with the essential unity of the Church?*

"**THAT THEY MAY BE ONE.**" Still more severe is the rebuke the apostle administered to those who were causing dissension and division among the Galatians: "I marvel that you are so quickly deserting him who called you to the grace of Christ, changing to another gospel; which is not another gospel, except in this respect that there are some who trouble you, and wish to pervert the gospel of Christ. But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach a gospel to you other than that which we have preached to you, let him be anathema! As we have said before, so now I say again: If anyone preach a gospel to you other than that which you have received, let him be anathema!" (1:6-9).

In this stern, forceful, and eloquent plea for unity among all those who glory in the name of Christ, one catches an authentic echo of the priestly prayer of our Lord at the paschal meal in the upper room: "Holy

Father, keep in thy name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one even as we are . . . that they also may be one in us, that the world may believe that thou hast sent me . . . that they may be perfected in unity" (Jn 17:11-23).

*1. Discuss Christ's eloquent prayer for unity at the Last Supper, and the importance which St. Paul attaches to unity of faith among Christ's members.*

**RESPECT FOR OUR BRETHREN IN CHRIST.** The occasional dissensions which occurred in the first 15 centuries of the Church were but tempests in a teapot compared to the volcanic upheaval of the sixteenth century. It shattered Christendom and tore large sections and even whole nations from the historic center of Christian unity. After referring to this tremendous earthquake, the Council makes several observations in a truly ecumenical spirit. It frankly acknowledges that men on both sides were to blame. Then it points out that persons born and reared in the separated Christian communities cannot be charged with the sin of separation.

On the contrary, the Church accepts them with respect and affection as brothers. Persons who believe in Christ and have been properly baptized are brought into a certain, though imperfect, communion with the Church. True enough, differences in doctrine, discipline, and in regard to the structure of the Church create obstacles, sometimes serious ones, to full ecclesiastical union. But the ecumenical movement has brought a new spirit of understanding, goodwill, respect, and love into the relations of all Christians and is striving with the guidance and assistance of the Holy Spirit to remove those obstacles. Hence in spite of all the difficulties and roadblocks, there is the great comforting truth, more clearly recognized now than ever before, that all who have been justified by faith in baptism are incorporated into Christ. Therefore they "have a right to be called Christian, and so are correctly accepted as brothers by the children of the Catholic Church" (DE 3).

*1. Why should we be ready to acknowledge our own measure of guilt for the divisions in Christian ranks and to make amends to our separated brethren? 2. Discuss the "new spirit of understanding, goodwill, respect, and love" that now prevails among all Christians.*

**VITALIZING ELEMENTS OUTSIDE THE CATHOLIC CHURCH.** The Council acknowledges that many of the most significant elements and endowments, which together build up and give life to the Church itself, can and do exist outside the visible boundaries of the Catholic Church. Among the most important of these vitalizing elements are the written word of God, the life of grace, faith, hope, and charity along with the other interior gifts of the Holy Spirit, as well as visible elements. Furthermore, our separated brethren also carry out many liturgical actions of the Christian religion. These certainly engender and foster a life of grace and hence can aptly give access to the communion of salvation.

Though the Catholic Church believes that the separated Churches suffer from certain defects of doctrine and structure, she gladly acknowledges that they have by no means been deprived of significance and importance in the mystery of salvation. Our Lord has not refrained from using them as means of salvation, as they derive their efficacy from the very fullness of grace and truth entrusted to the Catholic Church (DE 3).

*1. Discuss some of the elements that engender and foster a life of grace among our separated brethren. 2. Why is it reasonable to expect that our Lord would use the separated Churches also as means of salvation?*

**FULLNESS OF THE MEANS OF SALVATION.** The Council wishes to avoid, however, the false irenicism which seeks agreement at the expense of truth. Hence it feels obliged to point out that our separated brethren, whether considered as individuals or as religious communities and Churches, do not, unfortunately, possess that unity which our Blessed Lord desired to confer upon all those to whom he has given new birth in one body. All in that body he has quickened to newness of life. Hence our separated brethren lack the unity which the holy Scriptures and the ancient Tradition of the Church proclaim.

In the light of that historical truth, to which both these witnesses bear testimony, the Council feels in duty bound to declare that only in Christ's Catholic Church, with its all-embracing means of grace, is the fullness of the means of salvation to be found. If was only to the apostolic college, of which Peter is the head, that Jesus Christ addressed the words of the Great Commission: "All power in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you; and behold, I am with you all days, even unto the consummation of the world" (Mt 28:18-20).

*1. What would probably be the outcome of seeking "agreement at the expense of truth"? 2. In what ways are members of the Catholic Church especially blessed?*

**DUTY TO EMBRACE THE ENTIRE GOSPEL.** If there is an obligation on the part of the apostles and disciples to preach the gospel in its entirety, there is the corresponding duty on the part of the faithful to embrace it. Christ makes this obligation explicit when he says: "Go into the whole world and preach the gospel to every creature. He who believes and is baptized shall be saved, but he who does not believe shall be condemned" (Mk 16:15-16).

In the King James version an even stronger word — "damned" — is used. Hence it is evident that our Lord wanted to give no countenance to the procedure of an individual who would "pick and choose" — accept some of his teachings and reject others. That would destroy all possibility of unity of faith. This can be achieved only through the acceptance of a divinely established authority which decides what the teachings of Christ really are and what they mean.

1. *How serious is the duty to embrace the entire gospel?* 2. *Why is it necessary to have a divinely established authority to proclaim the teachings of Christ?*

TO THE ENDS OF THE EARTH. Since our divine Redeemer came to save the souls of all men and died for all, he wanted his teachings and means of sanctification to be accepted by all men and thus become the universal religion. If any race or even any individual were to be free to accept or reject his teachings, the purpose of divine revelation would to that extent be frustrated. Hence reason itself demands the establishment by Christ of a Church with authority to interpret his teaching to all men. Holy Scripture tells us that this is precisely what our Lord has done.

Only by so doing could our Lord, without working miracles without end, reasonably expect the fulfillment of his prayer at the Last Supper: "Holy Father, keep in thy name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one even as we are. While I was with them, I kept them in thy name. Those whom thou hast given me I guarded; and not one of them perished except the son of perdition . . . And the glory that thou hast given me, I have given to them, that they may be one, even as we are one: I in them and thou in me; that they may be perfected in unity" (Jn 17:11-23).

In the *Constitution on the Church*, which develops in greater detail some of the doctrines mentioned briefly in the *Decree on Ecumenism*, the Council points out that the motivation for the Church's worldwide missionary work comes from the Great Commission entrusted to her by Christ. Hence she makes her own the words of the Apostle Paul: "Woe to me if I do not preach the gospel" (1 Cor 9:16). She feels compelled by the Holy Spirit to send missionaries to bring the good tidings of Christ to the very ends of the earth.

1. *Why and in what respects must we look upon Christ's teachings and means of grace as the "universal religion"?* 2. *How can the laity fulfill their duty to help bring the good tidings of Christ to the very ends of the earth?*

FIRE UPON THE EARTH. "I have come," said Jesus, "to cast fire upon the earth, and what will I but that it be kindled?" (Lk 12:49) Here the image of fire refers to the purifying and cleansing power which the gospel, through the grace of the Holy Spirit, exercises upon mankind. The Church is the extension of the incarnation and the perpetuation of the sanctifying and redeeming mission of Christ. Hence she must reflect the burning zeal of her divine Founder to bring the life-giving, soul-saving truths of Christ in their pristine purity and integrity to all mankind.

Her consuming passion is to establish on earth the one body of Christ and to incorporate into it all who belong in any way to the people of God. "This people of God," says the Council, "though still in its members liable to sin, is ever growing in Christ during its pilgrimage on earth, and is guided by God's gentle wisdom, according to his hidden designs, until it shall happily arrive at the fullness of eternal glory in the heavenly Jerusalem" (DE 3).

*1. What is meant by the statement that the Church is the extension of the incarnation and the perpetuation of Christ's mission? 2. What are some of the implications of the Council's teaching that the people of God are in "pilgrimage on earth"?*

#### SOME THINGS TO DO

1. Discuss with some of your non-Catholic friends the obstacles to the reunion of Christendom and steps that can be taken to overcome them.
2. Consider seriously your missionary vocation as a Christian and how you can order your life so as to give effective witness to Christ and his Church.

## IV THE ECUMENICAL DIALOGUE

The Second Vatican Council noted with great joy the efforts being made by many Christian Churches in all parts of the world to attain the fullness of unity for which our Lord prayed so fervently on the eve of his passion and death. It exhorts not only Catholic prelates, priests, and religious but also the laity to take an active and intelligent part in this movement, so evidently inspired by the Holy Spirit. Hence ecumenical activity is not simply a matter one may take or leave: it is the positive duty of all Catholics.

*1. How true is it that ecumenical activity "is the positive duty of all Catholics"?*

**TWO BASIC FORMS OF PARTICIPATION.** The Council outlines two basic forms of participation. The first is to avoid expressions, judgments, and actions which do not represent the condition of our separated brethren with truth and fairness. Such engender exasperation, ill will, and bitterness and thus doom the cause of unity to failure. The first and indispensable step toward unity is mutual esteem, friendship, and good will.

The second form of participation is the dialogue between competent experts of different Churches. These are not debates but friendly discussions in which each explains the doctrines of his faith in greater depth and thus brings out its distinctive features. The guidelines for

such dialogues were aptly summarized by Pope John XXIII when he explained one of the primary objectives for which he was convening the Council. "We do not intend," he said, "to conduct a trial of the past; we do not want to prove who was right or who was wrong. The blame is on both sides. All we want is to say: 'Let us come together. Let us make an end of our divisions.'"

1. *Give examples of expressions, judgments, and actions that are apt to engender exasperation and ill will among people of different faiths.*
2. *What are some of the differences between religious debate and friendly discussion?*

**CONSTRUCTIVE DIALOGUE.** The purpose of the dialogue must therefore be constructive. It must seek to discover the truths held in common and to lessen the area of differences. When Protestants and Catholics realize that through the sacrament of baptism they have been made the children of a common Father and hence are brothers, they will not regard one another as strangers and much less as enemies.

The spirit of brotherhood and love will prompt each one to understand the other's viewpoint as the other understands it. It is surprising what progress toward ultimate agreement can be made when one approaches a discussion not to prove the other wrong but to learn what his position really is. Frequently such an open-minded approach will enable one to perceive elements of agreement not previously recognized. When basic differences emerge, they can be faced with candor and charity, and both sides can explore more carefully the causes of their differences with a view to seeing if they can be removed or at least diminished.

1. *How can participants in religious dialogue make their discussion truly constructive?*

**CONFESSION AND MUTUAL PARDON.** Humility too must play an important role in any dialogue that is to be fruitful. Pope Paul VI set an example in this regard that had a profound effect on both the Protestant observers and the Council Fathers. In his allocution at the opening of the second session of Vatican II on September 29, 1963, His Holiness set forth mutual confession and mutual pardon as the conditions of ecumenical progress. Speaking of the separation of Christians from one another, he said: "If we are in any way to blame for that separation, we humbly beg God's forgiveness and ask pardon too of our brethren who feel themselves to have been injured by us. For our part, we willingly forgive the injuries which the Catholic Church has suffered, and forget the grief endured during the long series of dissensions and separations."

In the past Catholic spokesmen tended to shy away from any such acknowledgment of guilt and to emphasize only the triumphs of the Church. They were inclined to focus attention upon the divine element in the Church and to pass over its human side. But since both Pope John XXIII and Pope Paul VI did not hesitate to acknowledge that we are not without blame for a divided Christendom, we will do well to replace our "triumphalism" with the humility of the gentle Christ who said: "Learn from me, for I am meek and humble of heart" (Mt 11:29).

1. *Discuss the importance of mutual confession and pardon in ecumenical dialogue.*

CHRIST'S LOVE KNOWS NO LIMITS. A couple of weeks after the allocution of Paul VI, Dr. K. E. Skysgaard spoke on behalf of the observer-delegates at an audience with the pope. After referring to the pope's allocution, he said: "We rejoice wholeheartedly at the new ecumenical spirit which is becoming manifest in this Council. We find ourselves meeting together at the beginning of a road whose end God alone knows. It is for us to walk together in hope because we believe that the crucified and risen Christ is with us on the way.

"This beginning is at one and the same time God's gift and a responsibility, because much will be required of all of us along this road: a clear witness must be given to the gospel, there must be humility and patience, all 'triumphalism' must be excluded. Above all, no divisions can prevent us from loving each other because Christ's love knows no limits. In this love of Christ, we must seek and find the truth: seek in order to find, and find in order to seek still further, as St. Augustine says."

1. *Explain why the promising beginning that has been made in the ecumenical movement is both "God's gift and a responsibility."*

#### GROUND RULES FOR THE DIALOGUE — I.

The ecumenical dialogue in the U. S. A. was pioneered by Father Gustave Weigel, S. J., and Dr. Robert McAfee Brown, a Presbyterian professor of theology, in *The American Dialogue* published in 1960. These two scholars showed how men of good will can discuss the areas of agreement and of difference in an urbane and friendly spirit and do so with much profit. Dr. Brown formulated the rules for a dialogue in an article published simultaneously in the Protestant weekly, *The Christian Century*, and the Catholic weekly, *The Commonweal*. Following are the six ground rules:

1. *Each partner must believe that the other is speaking in good faith.* This is based not simply on courteous civilized behavior but on the deeper fact that both parties are servants of Jesus Christ. "This," points out Dr. Brown, "makes us brethren. Some of my Protestant friends feel that there is an attitude of condescension in the Catholic description of Protestants as 'separated brethren.' I do not share this feeling. I think the phrase an excellent one, for it describes exactly what we are."

2. *Each partner must have a clear understanding of his own faith.* Dr. Brown frankly acknowledges that his co-religionists will have more difficulty with this stipulation, partly because Protestantism is less dogmatic and partly because of a longstanding and baleful American tendency to equate the Protestant faith with "what I find appealing." This will mean some strenuous intramural debate in Protestantism.

1. *Why is it necessary that each partner in the dialogue believe that the other is speaking in good faith?* 2. *How well equipped is the average Catholic to carry on religious dialogue with our separated brethren?*



## GROUND RULES FOR THE DIALOGUE — II.

3. *Each partner must strive for a clear understanding of the faith of the others.* This involves two corollaries: first, a willingness to interpret the other's faith in the most favorable light, and second, a willingness to revise one's views.

4. *Each partner must accept responsibility in humility and penance for what his group has done and is doing to foster and perpetuate division.* Many Catholics today are saying that the perpetuation of the divisions of Christendom is not simply due to Protestant wrongheadedness, but also due to the wrong kind of Catholic intransigence. Protestants, points out Dr. Brown, should acknowledge that for centuries the Protestant tendency was to divide Christendom . . . and that if the ecumenical movement is revising this trend, it is still building on the wreckage of three centuries.

1. *In what sense may one be expected to revise his own views in the course of friendly ecumenical dialogue?* 2. *Why do we strengthen rather than weaken our position when we admit that we, too, are partly responsible for disunity among Christians?*

## GROUND RULES FOR THE DIALOGUE — III.

5. *Points of difference that cannot be reconciled must not be glossed over out of a false sense of Christian charity.* "There is," remarks Dr. Brown, "no halfway house, for example, between believing: a. that the pope is infallible, and b. that the pope is not infallible. Not even the combined genius of Catholic and Protestant theology could produce a satisfactory middle term. There is no such thing as being 'a little bit infallible.'"

6. *Each partner must recognize that all that can be done with the dialogue is to offer it up to God.* While ultimate unity is the goal for which Christians are striving, they must not be too set in their opinions as to how this unity is to be achieved. "If in typical American fashion," Dr. Brown remarks, "we are immediately impatient for 'results,' we will simply have to learn something about the patience of God — or we will try his patience yet further . . . No Christian is entitled to believe only in what is humanly possible. We have to affirm — and really mean it — that 'with men it is impossible, but with God all things are possible.' And this is why the dialogue is important; not because we know what will come of it, but precisely because we do not know what may come of it."

1. *What will normally be the result of glossing over points of real difference between people of different faiths?* 2. *How does patience in ecumenical efforts differ from apathy and inactivity in this area?*

## SOME THINGS TO DO

1. Read thoughtfully Chapter II of the *Decree on Ecumenism* of Vatican II.
2. Discuss with some of your non-Catholic friends the six rules for ecumenical dialogue given in this chapter.

# V CONVERT APOSTOLATE AND ECUMENICAL SPIRIT

The *Decree on Ecumenism* does not use the word "conversion" but it discusses that subject in the light of the ecumenical movement. "It is evident," says the *Decree*, "that when individuals wish for full Catholic communion, their preparation and reconciliation is an undertaking which of its nature is distinct from ecumenical action. But there is no opposition between the two, since both proceed from the marvelous ways of God" (DE 4).

This clear, candid statement of Vatican Council II is of the utmost importance, for it removes the widespread misconception that all efforts to spread the faith among individuals are to be halted, that now our sole concern is with corporate reunion — the merging of all Churches into the one Christian body. This misconception arose from the fact that conversion efforts are out of place on two other levels: ecumenical dialogues between theologians and formal negotiations between Church officials concerning mergers.

*1. In what ways is the convert apostolate distinct from ecumenical action? 2. What relation, if any, has there been between the diminishing number of converts in recent years and the ecumenical movement?*

**CONCERN FOR OUR SEPARATED BRETHREN.** When corporate reunion will take place, God alone knows. It may require many decades and even centuries. Until that consummation happens, however, we must continue the age-old practice of presenting the teachings and credentials of Christ to all interested persons and particularly to those outside the Christian fold. To do otherwise would be to suspend the missionary work of the Church, which is an essential part of her divine commission and of her very life.

Thus the *Decree* explicitly states: "Catholics, in their ecumenical work, must assuredly be concerned for their separated brethren, praying for them, keeping them informed about the Church, making the first approaches toward them" (DE 4). We must also edify them by our Christlike lives. In short, we must have the zeal of Christ and the apostles in seeking in a humble and friendly manner to share the precious treasure of our holy faith, our greatest spiritual heritage, with those outside the fold. We must be willing to explain our faith and answer questions about it. If we don't know the answers, we must look them up. It creates the

impression of being priest-ridden if a Catholic says: "I don't know the answer. Go and see a priest." Few will go to the priest and thus converts may be forever lost.

Every Catholic family should have at least a half-dozen books which explain the faith in a simple, friendly manner and thus provide answers for questions frequently asked. A few such books are: *Father Smith Instructs Jackson*, *The Faith of Millions*, *What's the Truth About Catholics?* and *100 Common Questions About Catholic Faith*, Our Sunday Visitor, Huntington, Indiana; *Understanding the Catholic Faith*, Ave Maria Press, Notre Dame, Indiana; and *The Faith of Our Fathers*, P. J. Kenedy and Sons, New York, New York. These and other similar books will enable you to keep others informed about the Catholic faith — both our separated brethren and the vast multitudes unaffiliated with any Church.

1. Discuss the essential place of missionary work in the life of the Church. 2. What steps can Catholics take to acquire an ever better knowledge and understanding of the teachings of the Church? 3. Discuss books of Catholic instruction that you have found helpful.

THE APOSTOLATE TO CHURCHLESS AMERICANS. Surveys show that more than 70 million people in the U. S. A. have no church affiliation, while more than half of the affiliated acknowledge their attendance to be irregular. Careful students of this subject estimate that on the average Sunday more than 100 million people attend no divine service. This is the first step in the process of falling away from organized religion into a merely secular life. Hence it is evident that the U. S. A. is one of the great mission fields of the world. To ignore the presence in our midst of so many millions of churchless and non-church-going people and to do nothing for them would not help but would hinder the ecumenical movement. While working and praying for corporate reunion, we must strive with renewed zeal and vigor to bring the churchless millions into the fold of Christ.

This is the truth which Cardinal Meyer of Chicago stressed in *Steps to Christian Unity* (Notre Dame Books, Inc., Notre Dame, Ind.), a book which shows how every Christian can participate fruitfully in the ecumenical movement. "It should be clear," he says, "that it would be a great mistake for Catholics to cease to carry on the apostolate to individuals on the grounds that it hinders the ecumenical movement. It would be a mistake because the ecumenical movement itself requires an honest and full witness to the truth which has been given to every Christian. It would be a mistake for Catholics in particular, because we know that the entire revelation of Jesus Christ is preserved by him in the Catholic Church in its infallible truth, and it is this truth that all men are seeking."

1. How would you describe the general attitude of churchless Americans toward organized religion? 2. In what sense does "an honest and full witness to the truth" require Catholics to continue the apostolate to individuals?

THE SPIRIT OF TRUE APOSTLES. Pointing out how our apos-

tolate should be oriented, Cardinal Meyer continues: "Undoubtedly our apostolate should be especially directed to those who know little of the gospel and who are not affiliated to any Christian group, but we should also make available to Christian inquirers from any Church the opportunity to hear what the Catholic Church teaches. At the same time, we must scrupulously avoid attacking other religious groups. Let us not open old wounds, nor let us drive others away by an attitude of arrogance as if we had nothing to learn from them."

Sounding a similar note Cardinal Heenan of London says: "If we have the spirit of true apostles, we are bound to seek to spread the truth . . . This is the ideal of truth and charity which Pope John XXIII has set firmly before us. He has not asked us to play down Catholic doctrine nor to disguise our opposition to what is false in the teachings of other religions. He has asked us by prayer and example to strive 'that all may be one.' This is the plea of Christ's vicar as it was the prayer of Christ himself the night before he suffered."

*1. How can we expect to learn from our separated brethren in view of the fact that we have the fullness of revealed truth in the Catholic Church? 2. Comment on Cardinal Heenan's statement about "the spirit of true apostles."*

**MISSION-MINDED AND CONVERT-MINDED.** The statements of Cardinals Meyer and Heenan as well as of Vatican II reflect the traditional teaching of the Church for more than 19 centuries. This was emphasized also by Pope Pius XII, who spoke so often about the necessity for the laity to participate in the missionary activities of the Church. "We shall regard with special favor," said His Holiness, "all those Catholics who, moved by divine grace, shall strive to help their separated brethren to the true faith, preparing the way for them by dissipating inveterate prejudices, by teaching Catholic doctrine, and, above all, by showing themselves that charity which is the mark of a disciple of Christ."

In his great Encyclical *Fidei Donum* (The Gift of Faith) Pius XII urged the laity to be convert-minded and mission-minded. "The missionary spirit," he declared, "is not a virtue of supererogation, expected of the chosen few. This spirit and the Catholic spirit are one and the same thing . . . One is not genuinely interested in, and devoted to, the Church unless one is interested in and devoted to its universality; that is, to its taking root and flourishing everywhere on earth." In short, one is scarcely worthy of the name of Catholic if he is not mission-minded and convert-minded.

*1. Explain how the missionary spirit and the Catholic spirit are, in the words of Pius XII, "one and the same thing."*

**LAY PARTICIPATION IN THE CONVERT APOSTOLATE.** Pope Pius XI is generally credited with giving the lay apostolate in the 20th century its great impetus. His Holiness said: "It is necessary that all men be apostles." Pointing out that the first apostles would have accomplished little without the zealous assistance of the laity, he declared: "What would

the Twelve have done, lost in the world's immensity, if they had not called aloud to others — men, women, the aged, and children — and said, 'Let us carry forth the treasure of heaven; help us to distribute it'?' Those words might well be framed and placed in all our churches, schools, and in every hall where our laity assemble.

As a matter of fact, the whole idea of lay participation in the work of winning converts is just as old as the Church itself. Among the early Christians the faith was spread chiefly by the laity. The 72 disciples mentioned in the Scriptures were all laymen, and Christ sent them "two by two before his face into every city and place whither he himself was to come." Following the example of our Lord, the Apostle Paul made generous use of lay disciples and, in one of his epistles, lists the names of about 30. In the early centuries it was the laity who not only won most of the converts, but also furnished most of the martyrs. "It is an undeniable fact," declared Cardinal Caggiano of Buenos Aires at the Congress of Lay Apostles in Rome, "that from the first days of the Church the simple faithful helped the hierarchy of the Church in spreading the Kingdom of God."

*1. Discuss certain phases of the convert apostolate that can be carried on only by the laity, or at least more effectively by them.*

MISSION APOSTOLATE URGENT AND NECESSARY. Ecumenical minded as Pope John XXIII was, he did not fail to stress the duty of Catholics to share their faith with others. "Each one," said His Holiness, "must be zealous for the spiritual welfare of his neighbor, for the defense of his own faith, to make it known to him who is completely ignorant of it, or to him who knows it imperfectly."

In an address to the officers of the Pontifical Missionary Societies and the Missionary Union of the Clergy, on May 14, 1965, Pope Paul VI declared that the missionary responsibility to communicate God's message of redemption is more urgent and necessary than ever. While realizing that God has other means of saving those beyond the light of revelation, His Holiness said this does not mean that "the sons of light are permitted to leave it to God himself to work out his hidden economy of salvation." In similar vein the *Constitution on the Church* declares: "The obligation of spreading the faith is imposed on every disciple of Christ according to his state" (Art. 21). That aptly sums up the mind of the Church on this subject.

*1. Why is the responsibility to communicate God's message of salvation "more urgent and necessary than ever"?*

### SOME THINGS TO DO

1. Be deeply conscious of your duty to give effective witness to Christ by the example of a good Christian life.
2. Build up at least a small library of books of Catholic instruction for use of yourself, members of your family, and your friends, both Catholic and non-Catholic.

# VI

## ECUMENISM INVOLVES EVERYONE

In issuing the *Decree on Ecumenism* the Council did not intend it to be a mere paper document to be filed away in archives to enable future Church historians to discover its thought concerning Christian unity. The Council issued it as a *call* for concerted action by every member of the Church. The *Decree* presents broad guidelines so that all the people of God can translate it into action. Those directives are like the plays worked out by a football coach and given to every player so that each can play his part in striving for the team's victory.

The halfback who exerts himself only when he is carrying the ball won't stay on the team very long. Why? Because advancing the ball demands blocking by the other backs as well as the linemen. If this is not done, the ball carrier will make little, if any, gains. Team spirit and team play are all important: if they are lacking, few victories will be won.

This is true in all fields of activity, in the spiritual as in the physical domain. Coordinated action by every member is all-important. Hence it is that the Council exhorts "all the Catholic faithful to recognize the signs of the times and to take an active and intelligent part in the work of ecumenism" (DE 4). Unless the laity participate actively and wholeheartedly in the ecumenical movement, it will have no roots and, despite numerous dialogues by top-rank theologians, will bear no fruit.

*1. Why is it said that the ecumenical movement will have no roots and bear no fruit unless the laity take part in it?*

**STEPS TAKEN BY THE HOLY SEE AND THE AMERICAN BISHOPS.** The Church has demonstrated her determination to leave no stone unturned in her efforts to achieve Christian unity. Thus Pope John XXIII established the Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity, and placed Augustin Cardinal Bea at its head, with instructions to make *continuous* contacts with our separated brethren. It was this secretariat that extended cordial invitations to Protestant and Eastern Orthodox Churches to send observers. Many did so, with the result that the ecumenical movement gained vastly greater vigor and dynamism. Pope Paul VI made the secretariat a permanent one and enlarged its scope of service. Furthermore, His Holiness appointed commissions to initiate contacts and hold dialogues with the representatives of non-Christian religions and even with Communists and atheists. Christ died for all men, and hence the Church is concerned to bring the fruits of his redemptive

passion, death, and resurrection to every human being, regardless of race, color, tongue, or ideology.

At their annual meeting in Rome in November, 1964, the bishops of the U. S. A. established the Bishops' Commission for Ecumenical Affairs to interpret and implement for this country the provisions of the *Decree on Ecumenism* and to propose guidelines for ecumenical dialogue and action. It also provides a point of contact with other Christian Churches, directs the dialogue with the Eastern Orthodox, and serves as a liaison agency between the U. S. bishops and the Vatican Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity.

Lawrence Cardinal Shehan of Baltimore was appointed chairman of the commission, whose work on every phase of ecumenism has been portioned out among eight subcommissions. In November, 1965, the commission was enlarged from seven to fourteen bishops, and Bishop John J. Carberry of Columbus became the new chairman. Monsignor William W. Baum is the executive director. Commission headquarters are at 1312 Massachusetts Avenue, N. W., Washington, D. C. 20005.

*1. What is your reaction to the willingness of the Church to enter into dialogue with Communists and atheists? 2. How important do you think it is to have a Bishops' Commission to propose guidelines for ecumenical dialogue and action?*

**ECUMENICAL DIALOGUE ON NATIONAL LEVEL.** Due to the initiative of the Bishops' Commission for Ecumenical Affairs there have been several significant developments worth noting. In Washington, D. C., on June 22, 1965, 15 representatives of the Protestant Episcopal Church and of the Catholic Church met to discuss matters of a pastoral nature. Among these were the difficulties arising from mixed marriages and the Catholic practice of conditionally rebaptizing baptized Episcopalians received into the Church. Catholic representatives pointed out that baptism should not be conferred conditionally unless there is doubt about the validity of a former baptism. There was general agreement that the search for Christian unity cannot be left to theological discussions alone but will have its main basis in the mutual quest for holiness and adherence to God's will.

A second meeting on the national level took place in Baltimore on July 6 and 7, 1965, when Lutheran and Catholic representatives compared their interpretations of the Nicene Creed, which is used in the Eucharistic liturgies of both Churches. A statement issued at the conclusion of the discussions noted that full inquiry has to be made of "the nature and structure of the teaching authority of the Church" and "the role of Scripture in relation to the teaching office of the Church . . . We together acknowledge that the problem of the development of doctrine is crucial today and is in the forefront of our common concern."

*1. How serious are non-Catholic objections to Catholic procedures in mixed marriages? 2. How can there be development in revealed religious truths?*

**MORE NATIONAL ECUMENICAL CONFERENCES.** A third national level conference was held in Washington, D. C., on July 27, 1965, with 10 Presbyterians and 10 Catholics participating. The Presbyterian representatives were five ministers and five lay persons, of whom three were women. Representing the Catholic Church were Bishop Ernest L. Unterkoefler of Charleston, S. C., six priests, two laymen, and one woman. The joint communique issued at the end of the meeting is worth citing because it aptly depicts the present state of the ecumenical movement and the lines of its future direction.

It reads as follows: "We have met today as fellow Christians, conscious both of the unity in Christ that we enjoy by virtue of a common baptism, and of the disunity as Churches to which we have all contributed and for which we ask forgiveness of God and of one another. Our consultation has included both clergy and laity of the Roman Catholic and United Presbyterian Churches, as an expression of the belief we share in common in the priesthood of all the faithful. Our purpose today has not been to arrive at premature conclusions but to clarify the direction our future meetings should take. We have discovered two clear types of concerns, one focusing on theological issues that should involve us as separated Christians, the other focusing on the common task we face together as believers bearing witness to Christ before all mankind. We are sure that these concerns must not be separated from one another.

"We have decided that the particular thrust of our discussion will be a joint exploration of the theme of reform and renewal as a continuing process in the life of the Church and its people. By this we hope to highlight not only man's role but also the role of the Holy Spirit, and search for signs of his activity within the Church, within our separate and common worship, and in a fresh encounter with what he is saying to us through the voice of the secular world. For this purpose we envision that our future association will involve doctrine, worship and social action, in an ongoing search for fidelity to the gospel of Christ."

*1. What necessary connection is there between theological issues and bearing witness to Christ before all mankind? 2. Why must there be a continuing process of reform and renewal in the life of the Church and its people?*

**CHURCH-TO-CHURCH ECUMENICAL ACTIVITIES.** A fourth ecumenical dialogue was held on September 9, 1965, in Worcester, Mass., where representatives of the Standing Conference of Orthodox Bishops and a Catholic subcommittee, headed by Bishop Bernard J. Flanagan, discussed steps leading toward unity. Further meetings are being arranged by the Bishops' Commission which will bring together Catholics and representatives of a variety of other Christian Churches.

"The year 1965," said Monsignor Baum, "will go down in the history of the American Catholic Church as the year when bishops became officially involved in the great task of seeking unity. This overshadows all the high-level dialogues, joint prayer services and areas of religious cooperation that were significant steps forward in relations among Christian bodies."



Monsignor Baum cites three reasons for his conclusion. First, the bishops themselves are actually engaged in the dialogue. In the past the participants were almost exclusively speculative theologians. Now, in the light of Catholic teaching concerning the episcopacy, the dialogues take on new significance and importance. Second, the involvement of bishops as well as theologians will result in a more "pastoral" approach that will affect dioceses, parishes, and lay people. Third, the bishops' participation shows the Church's desire to deal with other Christians on an *institutional* basis, Church-to-Church. We are no longer treating others merely as sincere Christians but also as members of Christian Churches. This reflects Vatican II's recognition of the "churchly" nature and value of these institutions.

1. *Discuss the significance of official involvement of the bishops in ecumenical efforts.*

**ECUMENISM AT THE GRASS ROOTS.** This does not mean any lessening of the necessity, importance, and value of the dialogue on the other levels, involving pastors, religious, and laity. Such "grass-roots" ecumenism is essential if the dialogue on the upper level is to have wide popular support and practical significance. This is evidenced by the failure of the agreements reached at the Council of Lyons (1274) and at the Council of Ferrara-Florence (1438-1443) to heal the Eastern Schism. The reasons for the agreement had not been sufficiently explained to the Christians of the East and hence it had no popular support.

If the movement for Christian unity is to succeed, it must enter into the blood stream of the masses of Christian people and become a spirit-changing catalyst on the community and parish level. With this in mind, the U. S. Bishops' Commission for Ecumenical Affairs is endeavoring to have representatives of the different levels participate in the dialogues.

1. *Why is ecumenism at the grass roots essential to proper development and fruitfulness of the movement?* 2. *What evidence, if any, have you seen of such grass roots ecumenical efforts?*

**PROGRESS OF ECUMENISM IN THIS COUNTRY.** The ecumenical developments on all levels in the Catholic Church in the U. S. A. are so striking that they have attracted the attention of the people not only of this country but also of other nations. Speaking from the pulpit of Grace Episcopal Cathedral in San Francisco in 1965, the Rev. Dr. Eugene Carson Blake pointed out that recent developments in the Catholic Church make the need for non-Catholic unity efforts "more important and more urgent." Citing the "amazing and miraculous renewal of the Catholic Church," he declared that "no Protestant dares ignore either the reality of Catholic renewal or its bearing upon the life and direction of all Christian Churches." From a keen European observer comes similar testimony. Though the involvement of the Church in the U. S. A. has been relatively recent, observed Father Hans Küng, it has made such giant strides that it is already beyond the Church in Europe in several areas.

These developments show how earnestly the Catholics of this country

—bishops, priests, religious, and laity—have responded to the appeal of the Second Vatican Council when it said: “The attainment of union is the concern of the whole Church, faithful and shepherds alike. This concern extends to everyone, according to his talent, whether it be exercised in his daily Christian life or in his theological and historical research. This concern itself reveals already to some extent the bond of brotherhood between all Christians and it helps toward that full and perfect unity which God in his kindness wills” (DE 5).

*1. In the light of your reading and experience, how have Protestants in general reacted to Catholic efforts for Christian unity? 2. How can the laity further the cause of Christian unity “in daily Christian living”?*

### SOME THINGS TO DO

1. If any ecumenical programs have been initiated in your community, make a sincere effort to become personally involved in them.
2. During the coming week watch the papers and magazines for stories or articles on the ecumenical movement, and be prepared to report on them at the next meeting of your discussion group.

## VII

# RENEWAL AND REFORM IN THE CHURCH

The basic purpose of Vatican Council II was to restore the Church to the pristine purity and holiness with which she came from the hands of Christ. This means that the spiritual life of her members, from the top echelon to the bottom, must be deepened and intensified. The face of Christ must shine through the Church so that all men may recognize her as the spotless bride of Christ. Hence the note that echoed and reechoed in the speeches and deliberations of the Council Fathers and is resonant in virtually all their enactments is that of renewal and reform.

Thus in its *Decree on Ecumenism* the Council declares: “Christ summons the Church to continual reformation as she sojourns here on earth. The Church is always in need of this, in so far as she is an institution of men here on earth. Thus if, in various times and circumstances, there have been deficiencies in moral conduct or in church discipline, or even in the way that church teaching has been formulated—to be carefully distinguished from the deposit of faith itself—these can and should be set right at the opportune moment” (DE 6).

1. How did the Council Fathers set about attaining the basic purpose of Vatican II? 2. Discuss some of the areas in which renewal and reform can take place in the Church.

**REFORMATION AND RENEWAL ARE ENDLESS.** Because the Church is composed of human members, the work of reformation and renewal is an endless one. All through her long history saintly members have echoed this truth. It was sounded first by Christ who warned: "It must needs be that scandals come, but woe to the man through whom scandal does come" (Mt 18:7). It was echoed by the Apostle Paul who exhorted the Romans not to be conformed to the world but to be transformed or reformed by the renovation of their minds (12:2).

The Fathers of the Church of the East and of the West were as one in stressing the continuous need for reform. During the 70-year period from 1307 to 1377, called the Babylonian Captivity, when the popes resided at Avignon, France, the pleadings of St. Catherine of Siena and St. Bridget of Sweden placed the importance of Church reform on the same plane with the return of the popes to Rome. The cries of saintly prelates, priests, and religious for a reform of the Church in its head and members reached a crescendo in the era preceding Luther's nailing his 95 theses to the doors of the court-church of Wittenburg. The extension of papal taxes, the abuse of power by the Roman Curia, and the sale of important ecclesiastical offices to worldly men only strengthened the cry for the reform of church officialdom.

1. In the light of the history of the Church, what usually happens when pleas for needed reforms go unheeded? 2. In what ways does the current renewal in the Church differ from that which was needed in the 16th century?

**EXCESSIVE CENTRALIZATION OF POWER.** Heading the list of grievances drawn up by the Council of Constance in its decree *Frequens*, issued in October, 1417, was the one relating to the number, character, and nationality of the cardinals — a protest against the Italianization of the government of the Church. The ones that followed were concerned with abuses of papal power, whereby excessive centralization of power in Rome drained a grotesquely disproportionate share of income taxes and levies from all the countries of Christendom into the hands of the papal curia.

Writing in the *Catholic Encyclopedia* on the serious administrative abuses in the papal curia, Monsignor J. P. Kirsch of the University of Fribourg says: "The ever-increasing centralization of ecclesiastical administration had brought it about that far too many ecclesiastical benefices in all parts of Christendom were conferred at Rome, while in the granting of them the personal interests of the petitioner, rather than the spiritual needs of the faithful, were too often considered. The various kinds of reservation had also become an abuse. Dissatisfaction was felt widely among the clergy at the many taxes imposed by the curia on the

incumbents of ecclesiastical benefices. From the fourteenth century these taxes called forth loud complaints. In proportion as the papal authority lost the respect of many, resentment grew against both the curia and the papacy."

*1. Discuss some of the regrettable results of excessive centralization of power in the Church in the later Middle Ages.*

**THE DANGER OF NATIONALISM.** Since its birth nationalism has been an ever lurking danger to the Church which was established by Christ as a supranational institution to minister with equal zeal, solicitude, and devotion to the spiritual needs of all people. History shows, however, that there has been a human tendency to load the College of Cardinals with those of the same nationality as the reigning pontiff. Thus the French popes, during their 70-year residence at Avignon, were not slow in replacing, upon his death, each Italian cardinal with a French one, thus insuring a succession of French popes. Thus was the papacy stripped of its distinctively supranational character and converted more and more into an organ of the French monarchy which was then an exponent of a thoroughly aroused nationalism.

Similarly Italian pontiffs have tended through the centuries to place a disproportionately large number of prelates of their own nationality in the College of Cardinals, in the diplomatic corps, and in the Roman Curia — the administrative agency of the papacy. Thus at the eve of the Reformation the papal curia could count scarcely more than one or two German or English among its members. Paying large taxes in one form or another into the papal treasury, the people of Germany and England and other countries felt that too large a share was finding its way ultimately into the hands of Italian cardinals and their family dynasties.

*1. What is to be said of the danger of nationalism and its manifestation in the life of the Church at different periods?*

**LOWERED PRESTIGE OF THE PAPACY.** Thus the universal character of the papacy was not only obscured but was virtually shrivelled into an Italian principate — the office and domain of a prince. Pontiffs acted more like princes of Rome than universal shepherds. This bred a dynastic spirit of family relationship which was willing to subordinate the general welfare of the Church to the private interests of a family. To illustrate. When the whirlwind was about to fall upon the Church, Leo X (1513-1521) was more concerned about securing the rule of his family in Florence than about the welfare of the Church. Instead of attending to the rumblings of the approaching storm and the warnings sounded by Erasmus, Reuchlin, Wimpheling, Hutten, and many others, he turned his attention to the working out of a covenant with Francis I at Bologna, December, 1515. In it he bartered the right of nomination to bishoprics, abbeys, and conventual priorities and obtained in return chiefly the promise that the pope's family should rule in Florence.

Here was a gross misuse of papal power — the using of the office of universal headship to butter the family bread. Instances of this char-

acter, too numerous among the Renaissance popes to mention, lowered immeasurably the prestige of the papacy and caused it to shrivel increasingly into the office of an Italian prince. The compact whereby the pontiff surrendered the freedom of the Church in France to royal despotism in return for 30 pieces of silver for his family dynasty in Florence is characterized by the *Cambridge Modern History* as "the most immoral covenant that Church history had hitherto recorded, for the parties presented each other with things which did not belong to them."

1. *Discuss some of the causes of the lowered prestige of the papacy in medieval and post-medieval times.*

STEPS IN THE RENEWAL PROGRAM. We have cited some of the factors which paved the way for the volcanic explosion touched off by Luther, an explosion that destroyed the historic unity of Christendom and has left deep cleavages which remain with us to this day. Why? We have done so: 1) to give meaning and reality to the Council's appeal for reform and renewal in the Church today; 2) to show that the large human element in the Church is in constant need of reform; 3) to illustrate the immeasurable damage which results from the failure to heed the cries for reform; 4) to foster the ecumenical movement by admitting that mistakes were made on both sides. Thus Pope Paul VI stirred the hearts not only of the Protestant observers at the Council but of people throughout the world when he declared with disarming candor: "If any fault for this separation can be laid at our door, we ask pardon for it both from God and from our brothers who may consider themselves to have been offended by us."

All the enactments of the Council are designed to renew and deepen the inner life of the Church and to increase the relevance and effectiveness of the Church's ministry to the modern world. Heeding the urgent appeals which streamed into the Vatican from the Church in virtually every land and especially from the Council, Pope Paul VI effected a far-reaching reform in the Congregation of the Holy Office. He changed its name to the Congregation of the Doctrine of the Faith and brought its procedures in line with the principles of justice obtaining in modern courts throughout the whole civilized world. It is no longer the accuser, judge, jury, sheriff, and executioner; the accused is allowed to defend himself; the bishops of his area are to be consulted and other experts on the subject are to be heard. The Index of Forbidden Books is abolished.

1. *Tell why you think it is prudent, or not prudent, to make public acknowledgment of abuses in the Church which paved the way for the "volcanic explosion touched off by Luther."* 2. *What changes did Pope Paul VI make in the procedures of the Holy Office, now the Congregation of the Doctrine of the Faith?*

CHURCH RENEWAL AND CHRISTIAN UNITY. The pope has declared his intention to decentralize the powers of the Roman Curia and to internationalize it. At the opening of the fourth and last session of Vatican II he announced the establishment of a Senate of Bishops to

advise the Holy See on matters of policy and on items affecting the universal Church. Much of the liturgy is in the language of the people and more of it will be soon. Avenues of communication between the faithful, their pastors, bishops, and the Holy See are to be opened up so that an informed and enlightened public opinion can be developed within the Church. These reforms have already prompted Luthern churchmen to say that if Luther were alive today he would have no reason or desire to launch his Reformation.

Every renewal of the Church deepens and strengthens her fidelity to her divine vocation to bring Christ and his divine life to all men, and thus further stimulates the movement toward Christian unity. It has, therefore, profound ecumenical importance. "Already," declares the Council, "in various spheres of the Church's life, this renewal is taking place. The Biblical and liturgical movements, the preaching of the word of God and catechetics, the apostolate of the laity, new forms of religious life and the spirituality of married life, and the Church's social teaching and activity — all these should be considered as pledges and signs of the future progress of ecumenism" (DE 6).

*1. What steps toward reform and renewal have been inaugurated in your own parish and diocese? 2. How do such steps serve as "pledges and signs of the future progress of ecumenism"?*

#### SOME THINGS TO DO

1. In discussing Christian unity with our separated brethren, do not hesitate to admit that there has been fault on both sides, and that continuous reform and renewal are necessary in the pilgrim Church.
2. As channels of better communication between the laity and their bishops and priests are opened up, make use of them in expressing any constructive ideas you may have for the good of the Church and its work in the modern world.

# VIII

## PERSONAL RENEWAL

Reflecting the message of holy Scripture and the mind of Christ, Vatican Council II summons the Church to that continual reformation of which she always has need in as much as she is an institution of men. The Council then appeals to the members of the Church to strive for the interior conversion without which there can be no effective ecumenism. "But be renewed," says the Apostle to the Gentiles, "in the spirit of your mind, and put on the new man, which has been created according to God in justice and holiness of truth" (Eph 4:23-24). It is only from such internal renewal, self-denial, and unstinted love that we can acquire zeal for the promotion of Christian unity and struggle for it with steadfast earnestness and perseverance.

We should therefore beseech the Holy Spirit for the grace to be kind and considerate of others, to serve them with humility, and to be generous toward them. In stressing this point, the *Decree on Ecumenism* is mirroring the thought of St. Paul: "I, therefore, the prisoner in the Lord, exhort you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you were called, with all humility and meekness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, careful to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" (Eph 4:1-3).

While this exhortation is directed especially to those in holy orders that the priestly mission of Christ may be continued, it applies in a general way to all his followers. By coming among us "not to be served but to serve," as the Evangelist Matthew (20:8) tells us, Jesus set an example for all of us to follow.

1. *Why can there be no effective ecumenism without interior conversion and personal renewal?* 2. *What is meant by the expression "a community of love" that we hear so often these days?*

THE SPIRITUAL LIFE AND CHRISTIAN UNITY. The importance of such interior renewal for the success of the ecumenical movement was acknowledged by spokesmen of different communions at the Ecumenical Institute on the Spiritual Life which was held at St. John's Abbey in Collegeville, Minnesota, in September, 1965. "The idea of such a conference," they declared, "in which Christians of different traditions would share together their insights about the devotional side of religion is based on the conviction that the deepest forces conducive to Christian unity lie in the renewed prayer and spirituality of all Christians, and in the mutual help they give to each other in this."

In the past the customary procedure of ecumenical assemblies has been to discuss questions of theology, holy Scripture, and worship and to take

but scant cognizance of the importance of prayer and spiritual devotions for the furtherance of Christian unity. Hence at the opening of the Ecumenical Institute on the Spiritual Life, Dr. Douglas V. Steere, a Quaker of Haverford, Pennsylvania, pointed out: "Our task at this gathering is a unique one. I know of no ecumenical group of Roman Catholics and non-Catholics in the last four hundred and forty-odd years which has been bold enough to meet to share insights which each possessed for this highly intimate area of spiritual practice."

*1. Comment on the statement that "the deepest forces conducive to Christian unity lie in renewed prayer and spirituality, etc." 2. How did the institute spoken of above differ from most ecumenical assemblies?*

**THE EFFECTS OF COMMON SPIRITUAL EXERCISES.** When Christians of different denominations come together to discuss questions of doctrine, worship, and holy Scripture, there is almost inevitably a feeling of tension. Each member is concerned to defend the teaching of his Church and its interpretation of the Bible. Thus controversy and dialectics creep in where simple straightforward exposition, which leads to mutual understanding, is alone called for.

On the other hand, praying together, singing hymns together, listening together to Scriptural readings, meditating together, and engaging in other spiritual exercises create a different atmosphere and mood. Tensions are relaxed. Turning the mind to God in prayer and begging for the light to see the truth and grace to do his will in all things bring about the open-mindedness to truth and the docility to follow the movements of the Holy Spirit which are so essential for the advancement of the ecumenical movement.

When divided Christians stop glaring at one another in heated debate and get down on their knees and pray for one another in childlike humility, the Holy Spirit takes over. His moving influence warms their hearts, makes them more eager to listen than to speak, more anxious to learn than to instruct, and more intent upon finding agreement than difference. Then the Paraclete, the Spirit of Truth, calls the signals, plays the quarterback, and separated followers of Christ begin to think and act and work in harmony.

*1. What unfortunate developments are apt to take place in ecumenical discussions of religious doctrine and practice? 2. Why does humble prayer with and for one another produce such a favorable atmosphere and mood for ecumenical endeavors?*

**A TRULY AMAZING MIRACLE.** How else can we understand the miracle that followed the descent of the Holy Spirit upon the apostles and disciples gathered together with Mary and the other holy women in prayer in the cenacle at Jerusalem? On that Pentecostal Sunday the apostles, under the leadership of Peter, went forth and preached the gospel of Christ to the multitudes. Pierced to the heart, they asked Peter and the rest of the apostles: "Brethren, what shall we do?"



"Repent," replied Peter, "and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For to you is the promise and to your children and to all who are afar off, even to all whom the Lord our God calls."

What was the result? "Now they," *Acts* tells us, "who received his word were baptized, and there were added that day about three thousand souls. And they continued steadfastly in the teaching of the apostles and in the communion of the breaking of the bread and in the prayers" (2:37-42).

Here is a truly amazing miracle. No less than 3,000 souls were won for Christ in a single day! This is a feat unequalled in the missionary history of Christianity. It is important to note two things which preceded this miracle. First, the apostles and disciples were gathered together in deep prayer apparently for some days. Second, when they preached the gospel, they were so filled with the Holy Spirit that they spoke with the gift of tongues, and evidently their words brought into the minds and hearts of their hearers the Advocate, the Spirit of Truth, who conferred upon them the precious gift of faith.

*1. Review briefly the events that followed the descent of the Holy Spirit on the disciples and mention one or more lessons we should learn from these happenings.*

#### PRAYER MUST BE REINFORCED BY CHRISTLIKE LIVING.

Hence it is evident that when divided Christians wish to come to the complete knowledge of the divine truths, which alone will heal the wounds of their divisions, they must turn in humble and steadfast prayer to the Holy Spirit. We need to study more carefully the important role played by the Paraclete in the dissemination of divine truth and in the life of the Church. That role was explained for us by Christ himself when he said: "It is expedient for you that I depart. For if I do not go, the Advocate will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you . . . Many things yet I have to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. But when he, the Spirit of Truth, has come, he will teach you all the truth" (Jn 16:7-13).

The more we turn to the Holy Spirit in steadfast and humble prayer, the more speedily will we achieve that interior conversion and holiness of life, which are so essential for the progress of the ecumenical movement. When our pleas for unity are reenforced by Christlike lives, they will bear abundant fruit. This fact was stressed by Rev. Malcolm Matheson, president of the Greater Worcester Area Council of Churches, at the Bible services held jointly by the Protestant and Catholic clergy of Worcester.

"Our job," said Dr. Matheson, "is to lead our people to Jesus Christ. What we are, and what we pastors do, speak louder than anything we can say or shout from our pulpits." Pointing out that his presence in a Roman Catholic pulpit preaching to priests was a unique experience, he recalled a comment by Bishop Flanagan of Worcester that "if the

Flanagan grandparents could see the present course of ecumenism, they would turn over in their graves." "Well, let me tell you, Fathers," remarked Dr. Matheson, "if my grandparents could see me now, they'd get up and jump out of theirs."

*1. What evidence can you see that the Holy Spirit is present and active in the Church and in individual souls today? 2. How effective, in the ecumenical movement, are "what we are and what we do" as compared with "what we say"?*

CHANGE OF HEART AND HOLINESS OF LIFE. Such is the spirit-changing catalyst of humble prayer and meditation upon holy Scripture; it instills a docility to the grace and promptings of the Holy Spirit. At another of those Bible services, Rev. Charles V. Bergstrom of Trinity Lutheran Church declared that "ecumenism, as we are trying to practice it in Worcester, becomes a personal experience: an exemplification of the life of Christ in the community." Emphasizing the truth of Pastor Bergstrom's words, Bishop Flanagan added: "The basis of any involvement in the ecumenical movement is the change of heart and holiness of life demanded by the *Decree on Ecumenism*. These attitudes cannot be legislated. They must grow from within in clear response to the demands of the Holy Spirit."

The Council's emphasis upon interior conversion, humility, and holiness of life on the part of all who participate in the ecumenical movement lifts it far above the plane of commercial salesmanship, high-pressure tactics, and other such gimmicks. It is a high plane on which we walk with humility, holiness, and love to join our separated brother in a spiritual encounter. This is the basic truth which the *Decree on Ecumenism* thus stresses: "All the faithful should remember that the more effort they make to live holier lives according to the gospel, the better will they further Christian unity and put it into practice. For the closer their union with the Father, the Word, and the Spirit, the more deeply and easily will they be able to grow in mutual brotherly love" (DE 7).

*1. How can ecumenism best be made "an exemplification of the life of Christ" in a given community? 2. Discuss the need of humility, holiness, and love if we are to meet our separated brethren in a fruitful spiritual encounter.*

### SOME THINGS TO DO

1. Make a sincere effort to deepen your life of personal prayer and public worship, and include in your daily prayers a plea for reunion of Christians.
2. If and when the opportunity presents itself, enter into devout prayer with our separated brethren.

## UNIT II

### Chapters IX through XVI

# IX

## COMMON PRAYERS FOR UNITY

Interior conversion, holiness of life, and private and public prayer for Christian unity, declares the *Decree on Ecumenism*, constitute the soul of the whole ecumenical movement and merit the name "spiritual ecumenism" (DE 8). In praying for unity, Catholics are following the example of Christ who, on the eve of his passion and death, prayed: "Yet not for these (apostles) only do I pray, but for those also who through their word are to believe in me, that all may be one, even as thou, Father, in me and I in thee; that they also may be one in us, that the world may believe that thou hast sent me" (Jn 17:20-21).

In prayer services for unity and during ecumenical gatherings, it is not only permissible but even desirable for Catholics to join in prayer with their separated brethren. "Such prayers in common," says the *Decree on Ecumenism*, "are certainly an effective means of obtaining the grace of unity, and they are a true expression of the ties which still bind Catholics to their separated brethren" (DE 8). This reflects also the mind of Christ who said: "For where two or three are gathered together for my sake, there am I in the midst of them" (Mt 18-20).

1. What is "spiritual ecumenism" and how important is it in the program for Christian unity? 2. What is your personal reaction to prayer in common by Catholics and non-Catholics?

OCTAVE FOR CHRISTIAN UNITY. While such joint prayers for unity may occur throughout the year, they are especially appropriate and even called for during the Octave for Christian Unity, from January 18 through January 25 — the feast of the Conversion of St. Paul. For the past several years this practice has been growing, and each year during that octave joint prayer services are held in thousands of communities throughout the United States and Canada.

A notable instance of such joint prayer services occurred on the Sunday within the 1966 unity octave at St. Raphael's Cathedral and later at Bethel Lutheran Church in Madison, Wisconsin. Some 800 persons — Lutherans, Methodists, Congregationalists, Baptists, Episcopalians, Presbyterians, Catholics, and Greek Orthodox — gathered at the cathedral to pray for Christian unity and to repent for their divisions. In the congregation there were businessmen, laborers, lawyers, doctors, store clerks, farmers, secretaries, school teachers, public relations men, newspaper men from the printing plant and the newsroom, clergymen, and nuns.

"Some of the women," reported the *Wisconsin State Journal*, "wore fine fur coats. But they all sat together, these different people who weren't different during the service, as the sunlight streamed through the cathedral windows. Smiling Roman Catholic nuns ushered them to their seats. A Protestant monk, Brother Johann, of the Taizé community in southern France, led them in prayer."

*1. Why is the feast of the Conversion of St. Paul an especially appropriate day on which to close the Octave for Christian Unity? 2. Describe in your own words the setting for the joint prayer services held in Madison, Wisconsin, in January, 1966.*

**WITH ONE MIND AND ONE HEART.** When Brother Johann prayed, "O Lord, our God, save us," the congregation responded: "Gather us from among the nations, that we may praise thy holy name." The Rev. Nicholas Katinas of Assumption Greek Orthodox Church read from the Old Testament: "Behold, I will take the children of Israel from among the nations . . . and I will make them one nation in the land . . . and one king shall be king to them all." From the New Testament Rev. Richard E. Pritchard of Westminster Presbyterian Church read the well-known words of St. Paul to the Ephesians: "There is one body and one Spirit, even as you were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is above all, and throughout all, and in us all" (4:4-6).

The congregation sang a hymn written by Martin Luther: "Though nations stand unsure, God's kingdom shall endure . . . His peace shall ever reign." In the first brief homily Father Andrew Breines of St. Francis Xavier parish, Cross Plains, said: "Although we are members of different churches in the greater Madison community, we have found grace before God to set aside the differences that tend to separate us and make us strangers to one another, so that we might pray together with one mind and one heart for forgiveness, reconciliation, understanding, and unity."

He pointed out that all of us are to blame for the sins of the world because we are the causes of the confusion, anxiety, estrangement, and conflict so evident on every side in our society and culture. The way to rid the world of those sins is for all humanity to be united. He asked how Christian unity can be achieved, and answered: "We can begin by recognizing that we — you and I — are the Church. The Church to which we belong cannot and will not be reformed and renewed except through us as individual members."

*1. Why are passages usually read from both Old and New Testaments at Bible vigils and ecumenical prayer services? 2. Comment on the ideas presented by Father Breines in the first homily.*

**FINDING AGREEMENT IN CREED AND IN SPIRIT.** In the second brief homily Rev. Robert G. Borgwardt, pastor of Bethel Lutheran Church, pointed out that a man may be correct in orthodoxy and letter-perfect, but still be hard, selfish, full of pride, and completely unable to understand the words of Jesus: "Other sheep have I which are not of this

fold." He noted that Christians are often amazed when not only their creeds but also their spirit are in agreement. "And is not this fact," he asked, "the glory of such a moment as we are now experiencing?" He declared that our day requires that each part of the Church perfect its own faithfulness to the will of God so that we bring to each other not the least that we are but the most.

Rev. Donald Murray of St. Raphael's Cathedral read from the Gospel according to St. John: "Jesus said, 'Holy Father, keep them in thy name which thou hast given me, that they may be one, even as we are one.'" Responsive prayers were led by Rev. James A. LaRue of the Baptist Student Center and Ellis H. Dana, executive vice-president of the Wisconsin Council of Churches. The benediction was pronounced by the Rev. Paul Z. Hoornstra of Grace Episcopal Church.

Sitting between the two rows of white pillars in the cathedral, the congregation sang the hymn, "The Church's one foundation is Jesus Christ, her Lord." Sitting among them, reported Dennis Cassano, one could hear the individual voices, some a little weak or off-key, others louder and not so hesitant. But from the balcony above, this congregation of men and women of different religious beliefs sounded as though they had been "singing together for many years."

We have described in some detail the prayer service for Christian unity at St. Raphael's Cathedral in Madison, Wisconsin, because it is typical of the carefully planned programs being followed by an ever increasing number of churches, Protestant and Catholic, across the country. In communities with a number of churches it is becoming customary to have a prayer meeting at a different church on each day of the unity octave. Each service includes common prayer, Scripture readings, hymns, and a short homily. Where the number of Protestant and Catholic churches is approximately equal, the short homily, or sermon, is generally delivered by a visiting clergyman. Under this arrangement the Protestant ministers preach in Catholic churches, and Catholic priests preach in Protestant churches.

*1. Why must each and all of us try to perfect our own faithfulness to the will of God? 2. What is your impression of the singing one is apt to hear at Catholic worship services these days? 3. If you have participated in any joint prayer services, tell the members of the group of your experience with them.*

THE ECUMENICAL MOVEMENT AT THE GRASS ROOTS. A program of joint prayer services was followed with great success in South Bend, Indiana, during the 1966 Octave for Christian Unity. Arranged by a committee of which Rev. Clifford O. Nantz and Father Daniel E. Peil were co-chairmen, the program had the support of the St. Joseph County Council of Churches and of the Most Rev. Leo A. Pursley, Catholic Bishop of the Fort Wayne-South Bend Diocese. During the services the participants used prayers recommended by the National Council of Churches, the World Council of Churches, and the Catholic Bishops' Committee for Ecumenical Affairs.

"Our objective," said Dr. Nantz, "is to stimulate real interest in the cause of Christian unity through the widest participation by members of all Churches." Father Peil said: "We want to give public testimony that interest in Christian unity exists not just in Rome or Geneva or New York, but on the local level."

Only by bringing the ecumenical movement down to the grass roots will it become a spirit-changing factor in the life of the community and have a chance of success.

At the last of eight nightly Christian unity services in St. Matthew's co-cathedral, the homily or meditation was given by Rev. Daniel W. Fowler of the First Presbyterian Church. It marked the first time that a Protestant had addressed the congregation from the pulpit of St. Matthew's. "Let us not be so shy," said Dr. Fowler, "that we can't take the steps to make prayer the active and vital thing it is meant to be. Prayer is action, man's action to God and to his fellow man. No theological maneuver can substitute for true friendship, which is not conformity but unity."

*1. Why are efforts at Christian unity at the local level — grass-roots ecumenism — so important? 2. Comment on the statement that "no theological maneuver can substitute for true friendship."*

**WE MUST SEEK A UNITY OF LOVE.** The program in South Bend made a deep and widespread impact upon the whole community. Those who attended liked not only the prayer services but also the socials which followed. There Catholics and Protestants got to meet persons they otherwise might never know. "These joint prayer services," remarked Robert A. Grant, the chief judge of the U. S. District Court for Northern Indiana, "are most worthwhile. They bring us all closer together and should be continued. Only by such joint action can we bridge the gap that has so long divided us."

A joint series of prayer meetings in the neighboring city of Mishawaka produced similar results. In his homily at St. Bavo's Catholic Church, Rev. Warren Otter, associate pastor of the First Methodist Church, said: "In the past we have clustered separately, observed our forms of worship, professed our love of God and the world. But until now love has not been able to melt fear, distrust, and the near hostility that have beset us. That is why we must repent our sins and pray that the unity we seek be one of love that shall no more separate us from each other."

In short, the most remarkable and fruitful expressions of the ecumenical movement thus far have been the joint prayer services during the unity octave. They show what happens when Christians pray together for unity and thus enable the Paraclete, the Spirit of Truth, to take over. Indeed, the hope for the success of the ecumenical movement lies in their continued growth throughout all Christendom.

*1. Discuss the general effect of joint prayer services such as those described in this chapter. 2. What effect do you think such services would be apt to produce in your community?*

## SOME THINGS TO DO

1. If joint prayer services are held in your community, for example, during the annual Octave for Christian Unity, join wholeheartedly in them if circumstances permit you to do so.
2. Watch the papers, both secular and religious, for reports on ecumenical projects, especially joint prayer services, and bring them to the attention of members of your discussion group.

# X

## MUTUAL KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING

Common prayer for unity is definitely encouraged by the Council. Previous to the Council, the Lord's Prayer was generally recited at ecumenical gatherings. Now, in addition, it is considered appropriate for Catholics to join in hymns, psalms, Scripture readings, full Bible services or "vigils," and spontaneous prayer at ecumenical meetings. "Yet worship in common," says the *Decree on Ecumenism*, "is not to be considered as a means to be used indiscriminately for the restoration of Christian unity" (DE 8). Why? Because worship is the official, formal, public prayer of a Church or Community and generally implies commitment to the creed of that particular Church or Community.

The *Decree* cites two main principles upon which the practice of common worship depends: "first, the bearing witness to the unity of the Church, and second, the sharing in the means of grace" (DE 8). While the expression of unity ordinarily forbids common worship, the grace to be obtained sometimes justifies and even commends it. The prudent course to be followed in the light of all the circumstances of time, place, and persons is to be determined by the local bishop, unless the Bishops' Conference, according to its statutes, or the Holy See has decreed otherwise.

*1. What difference is there between prayer in common at ecumenical meetings and public worship in common? 2. In view of the two principles set forth by the Council, why is it necessary that there be some control over common worship?*

MUTUAL KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING. Mutual knowledge and understanding are essential for the progress of the ecumenical movement. This requires careful study, which should be pursued



in fidelity to truth and in a spirit of open-mindedness and good will. Catholics, who already have a proper grounding in their own faith, need to acquire a better grasp of the respective creeds of our separated brethren, their history, traditions, forms of worship, religious psychology, and cultural background.

Helpful for this purpose are meetings of the two sides, wherein each can discuss theological problems with the other on an equal footing. This means that Catholics who participate in such dialogues under the guidance of proper authorities should be truly competent. Through such friendly discussions we shall better understand the viewpoint of our separated brethren, and they will secure a more accurate insight into Catholic belief and practice.

*1. What advantages and what possible dangers, if any, do you see in the careful study by Catholics of the religious beliefs, forms of worship, etc., of our separated brethren? 2. Why must participants in formal ecumenical dialogues be truly competent and proceed under the guidance of proper authorities?*

**BASIC PRINCIPLES IN ECUMENICAL DIALOGUE.** To promote such mutual understanding, dialogues are being held with increasing frequency in all countries. At St. Charles Catholic Seminary in Carthage, Ohio, some 40 Protestant and Catholic pastors of that area assembled to "get the ecumenical movement off the planning boards" and into the lives of the people. The two principal leaders in the discussion were Father Carl Will and Rev. Ralph Huget, a Lutheran pastor. Father Will urged the different communions to concentrate their attention in the ecumenical movement on "their fundamental union in Christ, their devotion to sacred Scripture, baptism and common forms of prayer life."

Pastor Huget outlined the following three-point program for progress in Protestant-Roman Catholic relations: 1. Sincere Bible study, using the oldest available manuscripts to keep disagreement on the current meaning of words to a minimum. 2. Preparation and use of an exchange book list containing reference works on history, beliefs, and practices of various Christian groups. 3. An examination by each side of their varying liturgical services to discover similarities as well as differences and to determine common prayer forms.

*1. Comment on the points to which Father Will asked the different communions to give special attention. 2. Discuss the three-point program for progress laid down by Pastor Huget.*

**FRUITFUL DISCUSSION ON BAPTISM.** Chicago was the scene of a second meeting between the delegates of the U. S. Roman Catholic Bishops' Commission for Ecumenical Affairs and the U. S. A. Committee of the Lutheran World Federation in February, 1966. As planned at their first meeting, they discussed the baptismal article of the Nicene Creed, a confession of faith used by both communions: "I confess one baptism for the forgiveness of sins."

At the end of the three-day meeting, a joint statement was released

by the leaders of the respective delegations, Bishop T. Austin Murphy and Dr. Paul Empie. They said: "The series of theological discussions in which we are engaged continued to be exceedingly fruitful. We were reasonable certain that the teachings of our respective traditions regarding baptism are in agreement, and this opinion has been confirmed at this meeting." They also discovered that at times they used different terms to say the same things.

Commenting on the meeting, Father Godfrey Diekmann, O.S.B., said that the series of discussions was leading to mutual enrichment. "There has been," he said, "a moving of the Spirit in every Church, and our becoming aware of that moving cannot help but deepen our own appreciation of the totality of Christian life." Another participant, Dr. Krister Stendahl of Harvard Divinity School, remarked that one of the first fruits of the discussion was a "higher degree of mutual recognition of one another's Christian character."

*1. How important do you think it is for members of different confessions to discuss the nature and effects of baptism? 2. What would be your understanding of: a. "the totality of Christian life"; b. the "Christian character" of a religious group?*

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE AT NOTRE DAME. In March, 1966, Notre Dame University sponsored an International Theological Conference for a week-long discussion of the main theological issues of the Second Vatican Council. It brought together some 400 theologians and Biblical scholars, Protestant, Roman Catholic, Episcopalian, Orthodox, and Jewish, from the countries of Europe, South and North America, including many of the experts who assisted in the writing of the various documents issued by the Council.

Among the renowned scholars were Abbot Christopher Butler, O.S.B., and Barbara Ward from England; Henri de Lubac, Yves Congar, O.P., and Luis Bouyer, C.O., from France; Canon Charles Moeller and Piet Fransen, S.J., from Belgium; Karl Rahner, S.J., and Bernard Häring, C.S.S.R., from Germany; Edward Heston, C.S.C., and Bishop Carlo Colombo, the pope's personal theologian, from Rome; Bishop Mark McGrath, C.S.C., and Msgr. Jorge Medina from Latin America; David Stanley, S.J., from Canada; and Rabbi Marc Tannenbaum, Rabbi Abraham Heschel, Robert McAfee Brown, Georges Florovsky, Barnabas Ahern, C.P., Godfrey Diekmann, O.S.B., George Linbeck, and John Courtney Murray, S.J., from the U. S. A.

The presence of these scholars and many others of similar fame prompted Rev. Theodore M. Hesburgh, C.S.C., Notre Dame president, to say: "For a whole week this will be the focal spot for the greatest theological event in the Western hemisphere in our times. Living theology is the best proof for mankind that theology is not dead. Theological and Biblical revivals are key realities in our day, as are amicable discussions between great theologians who have begun to talk to each other after four centuries of silence, broken only by noisy polemics. This conference can

be a model of such fruitful discussion since it is both international and ecumenical, involving the highest level of scholars with real concern for the relevance of the issues to be discussed."

*1. What advantages can you see in bringing together representatives of different countries and different religious bodies to discuss theological questions? 2. What do you think Father Hesburgh meant by the term "living theology"?*

**EMPHASIS UPON EXPOSITION AND UNDERSTANDING.** The new Center for Continuing Education, in which the Notre Dame conference was held, has facilities for simultaneous translation of speeches similar to the United Nations, enabling both the participants and the audience to follow the speakers from abroad. Each day of discussion concluded with a Scriptural reading and a brief homily to indicate the important roles that prayer, meditation, and spiritual exercises must play in the struggle for unity. Only God can lower and ultimately remove the barriers erected by four centuries of division.

The learned character of the addresses was matched by the deep spirituality, objectivity, and sensitivity of the speakers to the differences of faith among the participants. The emphasis was upon exposition and understanding and away from sterile polemics. There was a unanimous feeling among both the active discussants and the scholarly audience that the conference had, through the grace of God, lowered some barriers and advanced the cause of Christian unity. The publication of the papers in book form by the University of Notre Dame Press will bring the fruits of the conference to a still wider audience in many lands.

*1. Why must prayer, meditation, and spiritual exercises play a large role in the struggle for unity? 2. Why must ecumenical dialogue emphasize "exposition and understanding" and steer away from "sterile polemics"?*

**FRIENDLY DIALOGUE IN HOMES.** Besides conferences on the high level of scholarship just outlined, there is need for those on a humbler level. Lay people with a college education as well as those with just high-school training need to meet in friendly dialogue in their homes. The booklet "Evenings of Christian Friendship" is now being used by Protestants and Catholics across the nation. The hope of the ecumenical movement lies in the further spread of this practice so that ultimately it will involve every Christian family.

Theology and Church history, points out the *Decree on Ecumenism*, should be taught from the ecumenical viewpoint so that they may reflect the facts with all possible accuracy. It is of the utmost importance that future shepherds of souls have mastered a theology that has been carefully worked out in this way, especially in regard to those matters which concern the relations of separated brethren with the Catholic Church. Thus they will be able to participate intelligently and effectively in the movement for Christian unity.

*1. What do you think of the advisability of having friendly dialogues*

*between Catholics and non-Catholics in their homes? 2. What is meant by the teaching of theology and Church history "from the ecumenical viewpoint"?*

THE ECUMENICAL MOVEMENT IN THE MISSION APOSTOLATE. "Moreover," says the *Decree*, "Catholics engaged in missionary work in the same territories as other Christians ought to know, particularly in these times, the problems and the benefits in their apostolate which derive from the ecumenical movement" (DE 10). Furthermore, the manner in which the Catholic faith is expressed should not become an obstacle to dialogue with our brethren. Following its own advice, the *Decree* avoids such terms as "heretic" and "schismatic."

Catholic doctrine should, of course, be clearly set forth in its entirety. Nothing impairs the ecumenical spirit more than a false irenicism which dilutes the purity of Catholic doctrine and obscures its genuine meaning. Indeed Catholic doctrine should be explained more thoroughly and precisely and in such terms that our separated brethren can really understand it.

*1. What might be some of the problems and benefits in the mission apostolate that could derive from the ecumenical movement? 2. Why is it so wrong and unwise to dilute Catholic doctrine and obscure its meaning in ecumenical dialogue?*

#### SOME THINGS TO DO

1. Give serious consideration to holding friendly dialogue in your home with some of your non-Catholic friends.
2. Visit a Catholic bookshop and see if you can obtain some books that will help you to become actively involved in the movement for Christian unity, e.g., "Evenings of Christian Friendship" or "Living Room Dialogues."

# XI

## COOPERATION AMONG CHRISTIANS

In striving for the great goal of Christian unity, both sides must cooperate and work together in a spirit of friendship, sympathy, and understanding. When Catholic theologians are engaged in ecumenical dialogue, they should, of course, stand fast by the teaching of the Church. Yet they should join with separated brethren in searching the divine mysteries with love for the truth, with charity, and with humility. Pride and arrogance poison the dialogue and foredoom it to failure.

When Catholics compare doctrines with the separated brethren, they should remember that in the Catholic faith there exists an order or "hierarchy" of truths, since they vary in their relation to the foundation of the Christian religion. "Thus," says the *Decree on Ecumenism*, "the way will be opened by which through fraternal rivalry all will be stirred to a deeper understanding and a clearer presentation of the unfathomable riches of Christ" (DE 11).

Here the *Decree* is reflecting the thought and using even some of the very words of the Apostle Paul: "Yes, to me, the very least of all saints, there was given this grace, to announce among the Gentiles the good tidings of the unfathomable riches of Christ, and to enlighten all men as to what is the dispensation of the mystery which has been hidden from eternity in God" (Eph 3:8-9). In setting forth the Christian faith, the Catholic spokesman should emulate both the method and the spirit of the great apostle.

1. *What is meant by the order or "hierarchy" of truths of the Christian religion?*

COOPERATION AMONG CHRISTIANS. The *Decree* then entreats all Christians to confess their faith in God, one in three, in the incarnate Son of God, our Lord and Savior. Let them join together and with mutual respect bear witness to our common hope in Christ our Redeemer, who never deceives us. "In these days," says the *Decree*, "when cooperation in social matters is so widespread, all men without exception are called to work together, with much greater reason all those who believe in God, but most of all, all Christians in that they bear the name of Christ. Cooperation among Christians vividly expresses the relationship which in fact already unites them, and it sets in clearer relief the features of Christ the Servant" (DE 12).

The theme of service after the example of the Divine Master was

sounded by the Council in its first public statment, "Message to Humanity," issued October 20, 1962, and is re-echoed in all its decrees. The *Decree on Ecumenism* declares that such cooperation, which has already started in many countries, should be continued and increased, especially in regions where a social and technical evolution is taking place.

*1. Why should all who believe in God, and especially Christians, cooperate in the doing of good? 2. Why is this especially necessary "in regions where a social and technical revolution is taking place"?*

**COOPERATION AT THE INTERNATIONAL LEVEL.** A good illustration of such interfaith cooperation was the action of the representatives of the relief services of the Roman Catholic Church and the World Council of Churches in issuing a statement in January, 1966, advocating the following five-point plan: 1. Synchronized efforts within their nations for famine victims of India and Africa. 2. Joint appeals not only for immediate relief and rehabilitation but also for projects which will seek to prevent the recurrence of such disasters. 3. Joint consultations in areas of need to take common action, as far as is possible and desirable, in their service to manifest the concern and care of the whole Christian community for those who are suffering. 4. A recommendation that the Roman Catholic Church and the World Council of Churches at the international level keep in closest touch with each other in order to provide the maximum continuing coordination possible for such Christian action. 5. A recommendation that Roman Catholic and World Council agencies act in partnership in their collaboration with governmental and intergovernmental agencies involved in dealing with this emergency.

There was splendid response to that appeal for cooperative action. About a month later Dr. David M. Stowe, head of the National Council of Churches' Division of Overseas Ministries, and Bishop Edward Swannstrom, executive director of Catholic Relief Services — National Catholic Welfare Conference, issued the following joint statement: "Confronted with the magnitude of the disastrous famine in India and the enormity of the suffering and death being visited upon uncounted millions of India's people, we of the Christian churches are conscience bound in justice and charity to raise our collective voices in their behalf."

*1. Discuss the five-point plan for concern and care for those who are suffering. 2. What responsibility do we have to relieve suffering peoples in distant countries, for example, the famine-stricken people of India?*

**COOPERATION TO END DISCRIMINATORY PRACTICES.** The *Decree on Ecumenism* points out that interfaith cooperation should lead to a proper appreciation of the dignity of the human person, to the advancement of the blessings of peace, the application of good principles to social life, and the promotion of the arts and sciences in a truly Christian spirit. In December, 1965, a good instance of such cooperation occurred in Detroit, where religious leaders launched an interfaith drive to use their purchasing power as a means of stopping discriminatory practices

by their suppliers. The program was modelled after one launched several years previously by Archbishop Dearden who announced that the schools, churches, and hospitals of the Detroit archdiocese would purchase material only from firms which followed a non-discriminatory policy in hiring employees.

The spokesmen for Protestant, Roman Catholic, Eastern Orthodox, and Jewish organizations in Detroit said that their *interfaith* program was the first of its kind in the nation. They announced that the four organizations were committing their "multimillion-dollar purchasing power to end discrimination in hiring and employment by churches and by their suppliers of goods and services." They said merit employment programs in which Negroes get an even chance would have to be shown by business firms before local churches and synagogues talk business with them. The four organizations are the Protestant Metropolitan Council of Churches, the Jewish Community Council, the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Detroit, and the Council of Eastern Orthodox Churches.

*1. Comment on the objectives of the interfaith cooperation as set forth in the Decree on Ecumenism. 2. Discuss the Detroit interfaith program described above and give reasons why you think such pressure should or should not be applied to business firms.*

**INTERFAITH COOPERATION FOR RACIAL JUSTICE.** This new spirit of cooperation has made itself evident in uniting religious leaders to come to grips with two major issues facing this country today: the civil rights of Negroes and world peace. In recent years priests, ministers, and rabbis have been marching, picketing, protesting, and have been arrested, arm in arm, in upholding the struggle of Negroes for civil rights. One of the most impressive expressions of this new unity occurred in Chicago in January, 1963, when 669 delegates from 67 major Protestant, Eastern Orthodox, Catholic, and Jewish organizations met at the First National Conference on Religion and Race. This unique gathering, initiated by Catholics, issued a well-reasoned and moving "Appeal to Conscience" against racial prejudice and inequality.

Carried in virtually all the papers of the nation, the Appeal said in part: "We Americans of all religious faiths have been slow to recognize that racial discrimination and segregation are an insult to God, the Giver of human dignity and human rights. Even worse, we have all participated in perpetuating racial discrimination and segregation in civil, political, industrial, social and private life.

"And worse still, in our houses of worship, our religious schools, hospitals, welfare institutions and fraternal organizations we have often failed our own religious commitments . . . We repent our failures and ask the forgiveness of God. We ask also the forgiveness of our brothers, whose rights we have ignored and whose dignity we have offended. We call for a renewed religious conscience on this basically moral evil."

*1. What is your attitude toward participation in civil rights demonstrations by Catholic priests, religious, and laity? 2. Why have the*

*Churches in this country been so slow to recognize and try to end racial discrimination and segregation?*

**OTHER FORMS OF INTERFAITH COOPERATION.** Another striking manifestation of the new spirit of religious understanding and cooperation occurred in September, 1963. Leading Protestant, Catholic, and Jewish clergymen appeared before a U.S. Senate committee considering the proposed nuclear test ban, to plead for its ratification. These, too, united in stressing the "moral aspect of the issue" and warned that "continued nuclear testing has consequences for life on earth that must be recognized."

On the matter of federal aid to church-related, non-profit schools, as shown by the action of the National Council of Churches of Christ, there is a new and sympathetic understanding of the claim of Catholics for federal aid in the teaching of secular subjects. On their part, Catholics are becoming more sensitive to the Protestant objection to the use of public funds for the teaching of distinctly religious subjects. It is this new spirit of understanding and good will that offers the best hope for the solution of these nettlesome problems, which have so long disturbed the relations of the members of the three major faiths.

The *Decree* points out that Christians should cooperate in using every possible means to relieve the afflictions of our times, such as famine and natural disasters, illiteracy and poverty, lack of housing, and the unequal distribution of wealth. "All believers in Christ can, through this cooperation, be led to acquire a better knowledge and appreciation of one another, and so pave the way to Christian unity" (DE 12).

*1. What is meant by the "moral aspect" of such issues as nuclear testing? 2. What effect do you think federal aid for children in private schools will ultimately have on Catholic education? 3. How does interfaith cooperation in the solution of social problems pave the way to Christian unity?*

**AID TO THE UNDERPRIVILEGED IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES.** A splendid example of cooperation occurred at the International Theological Conference at Notre Dame in March, 1966, when more than 250 participants, Protestant, Anglican, Orthodox, Jewish, and Roman Catholic, signed a statement urging the nations of the West to share their scientific, technological, and economic resources with the underprivileged millions of the developing countries. Modern means of transportation and of news communication have made all the people of the world close neighbors in space and time, but have not brought about a comparable nearness in generosity and love.

Hence the statement urged the "establishment of appropriate organs of education and enlightenment" to bring to the attention of their respective governments the urgent need of sharing their resources with the underdeveloped countries in the effort to lessen the poverty, hunger, and illiteracy among their underprivileged masses, and thus hasten the day when they will be able to share in all the scientific and technological bene-



fits of modern culture and civilization. The statement reflected both the spirit and contents of the encyclical "Peace on Earth" as well as of the *Decree on Ecumenism*.

1. *What do you think of the foreign aid program of the United States?* 2. *If you have read Pope John's great encyclical "Peace on Earth," discuss what he said in it about aid to developing nations of the world.*

### SOME THINGS TO DO

1. Read thoughtfully Chapter III of the *Decree on Ecumenism*.
2. Obtain a copy of the encyclical "Peace on Earth" and note especially what Pope John said about the duty of wealthy nations to help those that are in need of assistance.

## XII

# SPECIAL POSITION OF THE EASTERN CHURCHES

There are two principal divisions which have affected the unity of the historic Church of Christ. The first occurred in the East, either because of disagreements over doctrinal pronouncements of the Councils of Ephesus (431) and Chalcedon (451), or later by the rupture of communion between the Patriarchates of the East and the Roman See.

More than four centuries later in the West occurred the great religious upheaval called the Reformation, which pulled many Communions, national or confessional, from the historic center of Christian unity, the See of Rome, and gave rise to Protestantism. Among the separated Churches, in which Catholic traditions and institutions in part continue to exist, the Anglican Communion occupies a special place.

1. *Describe briefly the two principal divisions that have affected the unity of the Catholic Church.*

**DIFFERENCES AMONG THE SEPARATED CHURCHES.** The separated Churches differ greatly among themselves by reason of their origin, place, and time and even more because of the nature and seriousness of the questions concerning faith and church order. Without minimizing the differences, or overlooking the bonds which still exist among them, the Council decided to set forth various suggestions for prudent ecumenical action. The first ones concern the Eastern Churches, which have so much in common with the Church in the West.

"For many centuries the Church of the East and that of the West

each followed their separate ways," says the *Decree on Ecumenism*, "though linked in a brotherly union of faith and sacramental life; the Roman See by common consent acted as guide when disagreements arose between them over matters of faith and sacramental life" (DE 14). The Council gladly acknowledges that, among the many local or particular Churches flourishing in the East, the first place is held by the Patriarchal Churches, many of which are of apostolic origin. It has been, and still is, a matter of great concern for all of them to preserve the family ties which ought to exist between local Churches as between sisters.

1. *Why is it so difficult to lay down guidelines for prudent ecumenical action?* 2. *What are some of the things that the separated Eastern Churches have in common with the Church in the West?*

**THE EASTERN CATHOLIC CHURCH.** Here it should be noted that the Christian Churches of the East are divided principally into two groups: those which recognize the primacy of the Roman pontiff and those which do not. The first comprise the Eastern or Oriental Catholic Church organized under the major Eastern patriarchates of Alexandria, Antioch, Jerusalem (Constantinople, formerly), and the minor patriarchates of Babylon (Iraq) and Cilicia (Turkey). It holds in common with the Latin Church, which is called the Church of the West, all the essentials of Christian belief, morality, and worship.

It acknowledges the pope, patriarch of the West, as the supreme head of the Church, founded by Christ on the rock of Peter. It differs from the Latin Church in its customs, laws, liturgy, and rites. Its various bodies, called Eastern Catholic or Eastern Rite Churches, are specified chiefly by the jurisdiction to which they are subject, e.g., Antioch or Alexandria, and by the distinctive rites they use in divine worship.

1. *What is meant by the "essentials of Christian belief, morality, and worship"?* 2. *Discuss some of the ways in which Eastern Catholics differ from those of the West.*

**HOW DIFFERENT RITES AND CUSTOMS DEVELOPED.** Beginning in Palestine, the Catholic Church spread to the other regions of the ancient world. In the course of time certain cities became leading centers of Christian life and missionary activity, notably, Alexandria, Antioch, Jerusalem, and Constantinople in the East, and Rome in the West. As they exerted great influence on the spread and practice of the Christian faith in general and on the forms of worship in particular, their usages became recognized as norms within their spheres of influence. Thus there developed differences in rites, liturgy, laws, and customs which were rooted in essentials of the Christian faith and related to particular cultural patterns.

The East-West division of the Roman Empire, caused by various geographical, political, and cultural factors, was matched by the East-West division within the Church. This division did not impair the essential unity of the Church, since the successor of St. Peter, the Bishop of Rome, was universally acknowledged as the supreme authority. While

recognizing the pope as the supreme head of the Church, and Eastern Catholic is subject to one of the Eastern patriarchs and follows the approved customs, laws, and liturgy of an Eastern Rite Church.

On the other hand, the Roman (Latin or Western) Catholic is subject to the pope and follows the approved customs, laws, and liturgy of the Latin Church. A person belongs to the rite in which he was baptized but, with the permission of the Holy See, he may change his rite. Holy Communion may be received, confession made, and the duty of hearing Mass fulfilled in any approved rite. Marriage of an Eastern Rite man and a Latin Rite woman takes place in the rite of the man. The Byzantine, Antiochian, Alexandrian, Armenian, and Chaldean are the five principal rites used in their entirety or in modified form by the various Eastern Churches. In the beginning of 1965, there were approximately 823,100 Eastern Rite Catholics in the U. S. A. and about 246,302 in Canada, making a total of 1,069,402 in North America.

*1. How can we account historically for the different rites, laws, and customs in the various Eastern patriarchates? 2. Why is it wise for the Church to encourage and help the Eastern Catholics to preserve their distinctive rites and customs?*

**EASTERN CHURCHES SEPARATED FROM ROME.** The second large group of Christian Churches in the East comprise those separated from Rome chiefly because they do not acknowledge and hold communion with the pope as the visible head of the Church established by Christ. In matters of faith and morals they are in general agreement with the Catholic Church, and follow the same liturgy used by their counterparts in the Eastern Catholic Churches.

The vast majority of the Eastern Churches separated from Rome follow the Byzantine Rite and generally use the title "Orthodox." They have unity among themselves in matters of faith and worship but not in a single supreme head, although they all consider the Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople as their spokesman and regard him as the "First (of the patriarchs) among Equals." There are some 15 independent, self-governing jurisdictions which are generally divided along national or language lines.

These Churches have valid orders and sacraments, and in general maintain the same doctrines as the Catholic Church. They accept, however, the authority of only the first seven Ecumenical Councils. There were several temporary ruptures of the unity with Rome during the first 10 centuries. The main rupture is considered that of Michael Cerularius in 1054, and most modern historians accept 1453, when Constantinople fell to the Moslems, as the date of the final break. The grand total of Eastern Christians separated from Rome is estimated to be about 163,-922,000, of whom about 3,098,000 are in the U. S. A.

*1. Explain the position of the Eastern Christian Churches which do not acknowledge the pope as head of Christ's Church. 2. Sketch briefly the historical background of their separation from the Holy See.*

## IMPROVED RELATIONS WITH THE ORTHODOX CHURCHES.

Since the first of Pope John XXIII's friendly overtures to the Orthodox, the relations between the Catholic Church and the Eastern Christian Churches have steadily improved. This is evidenced by the presence of Orthodox observers at sessions of the Vatican Council, by the decrees of the Council on the Eastern Churches and ecumenism, and by the activities of Cardinal Bea and other members of the Christian Unity Commission. Supporting and advancing this trend has been the personal concern of Paul VI and the Ecumenical Patriarch Athenagoras I, who met in the Holy Land early in 1964, and the attitudes reflected in deliberations of the Pan-Orthodox conferences at Rhodes in 1963 and 1964.

Reflecting the improvements in relations was the action of Orthodox Patriarch Athenagoras I of Constantinople in June, 1965, when he sent his best wishes to Pope Paul VI on the second anniversary of his election. "We cordially congratulate your Most Beloved Holiness," he wrote, "on the occasion of the anniversary of your glorious election. May the Lord grant to your Venerable Holiness the strength of physical and spiritual vigor so that you may continue for a long time to bring honor to the ancient See of Rome and may advance the work which you accepted from God for the achievement of Christian unity."

*1. What signs have we seen of improved relations between Rome and the Eastern Orthodox Churches? 2. Comment on the gracious message of Patriarch Athenagoras I to Pope Paul VI.*

**DUAL ROLE OF EASTERN RITE CATHOLICS.** In helping to close the gap between the separated Churches of the East and the Church of the West, the Eastern Rite Catholics can play a double role. This was pointed out by Ukrainian Rite Archbishop Maxim Hermaniuk of Winnipeg in the 96th general congregation of the Council on October 7, 1964. He explained that their role was to be faithful to St. Peter's successors and to be faithful to their own tradition. In this way, he declared, they would open the way to the dialogue with the Christian Churches of the East.

Referring to a portion of the *Decree on Ecumenism*, Archbishop Hermaniuk pointed out that the aim of the Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity is to show Catholics that the institutions and forms of the Eastern and Western Churches are of the same essential nature. It must be kept in mind, he noted, that the cardinal legate who excommunicated an Eastern patriarch in 1054 (Michael Cerularius) attributed all known heresies in the Church to the Byzantine leader. Today, he added, it is recognized that no dogmatic truth was actually involved at the time.

*1. How did Archbishop Hermaniuk describe the important role to be played by Eastern Rite Catholics in helping to close the gap between East and West?*

**EAST AND WEST HAVE MUCH IN COMMON.** In the 104th general congregation of the Council on October 19, 1964, the Melkite Rite Archbishop Joseph Tawil, Patriarchal Vicar for Damascus, Syria, voiced

objection to the presence of a Latin Patriarch in Jerusalem. This patriarchate was established for Jerusalem during the time of the Crusades and has been maintained there ever since despite the relatively few Latin Rite Catholics, as compared with those of the Eastern Rite in that area. This is part of the dialogue, which will help to clear up misunderstandings and remove needless sources of irritation, that the *Decree on Ecumenism* seeks to encourage.

"Similarly it must not be forgotten," says the *Decree*, "that from the beginning the Churches of the East have had a treasury from which the Western Church has drawn extensively — in liturgical practice, spiritual tradition, and law. Nor must we undervalue the fact that it was the Ecumenical Councils held in the East that defined the basic dogmas of the Christian faith, on the Trinity and on the Word of God who took flesh of the Virgin Mary. To preserve this faith these Churches have suffered and still suffer much" (DE 14).

The spiritual legacy handed down by the apostles was received in varied forms and ways so that from the earliest days the Church developed along different lines in various countries due to diverse mentalities and cultural patterns. Hence the Council urges all to give proper consideration to the origin and development of the Churches of the East, to the character of the relations between them and the Roman See prior to the estrangement, and to form for themselves a proper evaluation of such facts. This will help to get the dialogue off the launching pad. It will also enable the Churches of the East and the Church of the West to realize how much they have in common and the steps that still remain to achieve that unity of faith, worship, and love for which the Lord Jesus prayed so earnestly on the eve of his passion and death.

*1. Why do you think some Eastern Catholics object to the presence of patriarchs of the Latin Rite in their midst? 2. Discuss the proper set of mind and heart that churchmen of the West should have in approaching ecumenical dialogue with the Eastern Rite Christians.*

### SOME THINGS TO DO

1. Try to do a little supplementary reading on the Christians of the Eastern Rites, both Catholic and Orthodox.
2. If there are any Eastern Christians in your community, make an effort to get acquainted with them and to enter into friendly dialogue with them.

# XIII

## UNION OF ALL CHRISTIANS: OUR GOAL

**T**he separated Christian Churches of the Eastern Rite have very much in common with the Roman Catholic Church in faith, worship, and moral code. With great reverence and devotion they celebrate the sacred liturgy, especially the eucharistic mystery, and thus have access to God the Father through the Son, the Word Incarnate who suffered and was glorified, in the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. They are thus made "sharers of the divine nature," and enter into communion with the most holy Trinity. They likewise venerate the saints, among whom are the Fathers of the universal Church.

These Churches possess true sacraments; consequently, some worship in common, under suitable circumstances and with the approval of church authority, is not merely possible but is encouraged. From the times of the holy Fathers monasticism flourished in the East and later spread to the West, from which source Latin monastic life took its rise. Hence the Church encourages her members to avail themselves more frequently of the spiritual riches of the Eastern Fathers. By so doing we shall preserve the fullness of Christian tradition and thus help in bringing about a reconciliation between Eastern and Western Christians.

1. *Why do the Churches of the Eastern Rite have much more in common with the Catholic Church than do the various Protestant Churches?*
2. *What do you think will be accomplished by worship in common with Christians of the Eastern Rites?*

**UNITY IN DIVERSITY.** From the early centuries the Churches of the East followed their own customs, used their own tongues in the liturgy, and observed their own disciplines. All these were sanctioned by the holy Fathers, by synods, and even by Ecumenical Councils. Instead of being a hindrance to the Church's unity, such diversity enriches the liturgical and spiritual life of the Church and contributes to the success of her divine mission. Hence Vatican II solemnly declared "that the Churches of the East, while remembering the necessary unity of the whole Church, have the power to govern themselves according to the disciplines proper to them, since these are better suited to the character of their faithful, and more for the good of their souls" (DE 16).

In its *Decree on the Catholic Churches of the Eastern Rite*, Vatican II sets forth its policy on this matter in greater detail. It declares that Eastern Christians, who are separated in good faith from the Catholic Church, may if they have the proper dispositions receive the sacraments

of penance, the Eucharist, and the anointing of the sick.

Moreover, "Catholics may ask for these same sacraments from those non-Catholic ministers whose Churches possess valid sacraments, as often as necessity or a genuine spiritual benefit recommends such a course and access to a Catholic priest is physically or morally impossible. Further, given the same principles, common participation by Catholics with their Eastern separated brethren in sacred functions, things and places is allowed for a just cause" (Articles 27 and 28). Vatican II adopted this conciliatory policy with the brethren of the separated Eastern Churches to promote and foster that unity for which Christ prayed so fervently.

1. *Explain how diversity of customs, rites, and disciplines enriches the life of the Church and contributes to the success of her mission.*
2. *Discuss policies of Vatican II in regard to participation by Catholics in rites of the separated Eastern Churches.*

#### COMPLIMENTARY WAYS OF EXPRESSING DIVINE TRUTHS.

The legitimate variety which obtains among the customs, rites, and disciplines of the Churches of the East and the West is also found in different ways of expressing divine truths. Such various theological formulations are to be regarded often as complimentary rather than conflicting. Hence Vatican II gladly acknowledges that the authentic theological traditions of the Orientals are rooted in holy Scripture and beautifully expressed in their liturgy. While the Council thanks God that so many Eastern Christians are preserving their heritage in full communion with the Church of the West, it acknowledges that "all this heritage of spirituality and liturgy, of discipline and theology, in its various traditions, this holy synod declares to belong to the full Catholic and apostolic character of the Church" (DE 17).

In its earnest desire to restore unity, the Council adopts as its own the policy announced in Acts that one must impose no burden beyond what is indispensable (15:28). It encourages all Catholics, individually and in their various organizations, to put forth every effort to promote unity. They can do this by prayer and friendly dialogue. The Council requests both priests and parishioners to take a friendly interest in Christians living far from their Eastern homeland and to help them in every way possible. If this is done in a spirit of love, without bickering or rivalry, the Council expresses the hope that "the barrier dividing the Eastern Church and the Western Church will be removed and that at last there may be but the one dwelling, firmly established on Jesus Christ, the cornerstone, who will make both one" (DE 18).

1. *Explain the difference between divine truths in themselves and the ways in which they are expressed.*
2. *What opportunities, if any, do you have in your community to show "friendly interest" in members of the separated Eastern Churches?*

**NEW RELATIONS BETWEEN ORTHODOX AND CATHOLIC CHURCHES.** In February, 1965, Pope Paul VI received two Greek Orthodox envoys sent by Orthodox Ecumenical Patriarch Athenagoras of Con-

stantinople and his synod to carry out the mandate given Athenagoras by the Pan-Orthodox Conference held at Rhodes in the preceding November. The envoys informed the pope that the Conference of 14 Churches had unanimously agreed that further preparation was necessary for a dialogue between the Orthodox and Catholic Churches. They said that the Conference would labor for the success of such a dialogue "through creating favorable circumstances and by study of the various subjects of this dialogue."

Pleased with the message, the pontiff declared that this day might be regarded as marking the end of centuries of histories and the beginning of new relations between the Catholic Church and the Orthodox East. At the International Theological Conference at Notre Dame University in March, 1966, a noted Orthodox theologian, Rev. John Meyendorff, threw some light on the refusal of the Orthodox to enter at once into a dialogue with Rome. He explained that it did not stem from fear of Rome but from the simple conviction that "the premises of our common past have not been exploited to their full capacity."

Father Meyendorff pointed out that belief in the full presence of Christ in the sacramental community of the local Church, and in the collective and collegiate infallibility of the episcopate must ultimately lead to more progress in our mutual understanding, provided no misleading shortcuts are taken. In the pluralistic and free society of America, he noted, the traditional categories of "East" and "West" have little meaning for American-born members of the Orthodox Church. "They speak and think," he said, "exactly like other Americans and understandably refuse to determine their Orthodoxy by the unique reason that their grandparents were Greek or Russian."

*1. What do you think is meant by "creating favorable circumstances" for a dialogue between Rome and the Orthodox Churches? 2. Discuss: a. some of the common beliefs that should lead to progress in ecumenical relations between "East" and "West"; b. the danger of "misleading shortcuts."*

**SEPARATED CHURCHES OF THE WEST.** The *Decree on Ecumenism* then turns to a discussion of the Churches of the West separated from the Apostolic See of Rome. These sprang for the most part either directly from the great religious upheaval of the sixteenth century or indirectly from the principle of the private interpretation of holy Scripture. Thus John Wycliff (1320-1384), the "Morning Star of the Reformation," prepared the way for the Reformation by teaching that the Bible alone is the sufficient rule of faith. Rejecting the authority of pope and bishops, he denied the real presence of Christ in the Holy Eucharist and attacked the sacrament of penance and the doctrine of indulgences.

John Hus (1369-1450), a Bohemian priest, espoused the teachings of Wycliff, and one group of his followers founded the Church of the Brotherhood in 1457. It later became known as the United Brethren or Moravian Church, and is considered the earliest independent Protestant body. But the key figure in the Protestant revolt and the man who is



generally considered the Father of Protestantism was an Augustinian friar, Martin Luther (1483-1546). In 1517 he published at Wittenberg 95 theses concerning matters of Catholic belief and practice.

*1. Review the beginnings of the "great religious upheaval of the sixteenth century."*

**SOME LEADERS OF THE REFORMATION.** Luther taught that original sin corrupted human nature radically and affected every aspect of man's being. By his own powers unregenerated man cannot, without the aid of divine grace, make himself acceptable to God. Understood as the remission of sins, justification is achieved by grace through faith. This entails not only the assent of the mind but also an act of confidence by the will. While good works are the requisite fruits of faith, they do not merit salvation. Retaining the sacraments of baptism, penance, and Holy Communion as effective channels of divine grace, Luther held that in the Holy Communion the consecrated bread and wine are the body and blood of Christ. The rule of faith is the divine revelation in the Bible. He rejected purgatory, indulgences, the invocation of saints, and the efficacy of prayers for the dead.

Ulrich Zwingli (1481-1531), a priest, was the leader of the Reformation in Switzerland. Declaring that the Bible was the only source of faith, he abolished the Mass, Holy Eucharist, and penance, denied indulgences, destroyed relics, altars, and sacred pictures, and rejected clerical celibacy.

Probably second only to Luther in influencing the new thinking of the Reformation was John Calvin (1509-1564). Combining some of the doctrines of Luther and Zwingli with his own, Calvin taught that some persons were absolutely predestined to heaven and others to hell. He retained baptism and the Lord's Supper as signs of grace, and believed that his strongly organized Church should dictate to the State.

*1. What conclusions would you draw from the above summary of teachings of Reformation leaders?*

**ANGLICANISM OR EPISCOPALIANISM.** Anglicanism or Episcopalianism began in England with a denial of papal authority. In 1535 King Henry VIII (1491-1547) decreed the Act of Supremacy, proclaiming himself the head of the Church of England. Despite his rejection of the authority of the Holy See, the articles of the act upheld the chief truths of the faith. During the reigns of Edward VI (1547-1553) and Elizabeth (1558-1603), deviations from the Catholic faith were introduced.

The real presence of Christ in the Holy Eucharist was denied, the Mass was replaced by a Communion service, the invocation of the Blessed Virgin and the saints was called idolatry, and Scripture was declared the rule of faith. The rite of ordination to holy orders was altered, mention of the Sacrifice of the Mass being excluded. In 1896 Pope Leo XIII declared that all Anglican orders were null and void.

There are three main divisions in Anglicanism: High Church, conservative and clinging to most of the ancient faith; Broad Church, liberal

and independent, tending toward rationalism; Low Church, left wing, radical and evangelical. From English Protestantism came a variety of denominations: Puritans, upholding rigid Calvinism; Congregationalists, affirming the freedom of the individual in religious matters and the autonomy of each congregation; Quakers, holding that the only spiritual law is that of internal divine illumination and rejecting ecclesiastical authority and the sacraments.

*1. What lesson can be learned from the gradual deviations from the Catholic faith on the part of Anglicans, following the rejection of papal authority? 2. If there is an Episcopalian Church in your community, discuss the character of its beliefs and practices.*

#### SOME THINGS TO DO

1. Make a sincere effort to learn more about the history, beliefs, and practices of some of the major separated Churches of both East and West. (Cf. *The Catholic Encyclopedia* — numerous articles; *The Story of America's Religions*, Hartzell Spence; Holt, Rinehart, Winston.)
2. Discuss with your parish priests the possibility of forming an ecumenical discussion group to carry on "Living Room Dialogues."

## XIV

# THE SEPARATED CHURCHES IN THE WEST

The separated Churches in the West differ considerably not only from the Catholic Church but also from one another. These differences stem from their varied origins and convictions concerning doctrine, worship, and discipline. In the previous chapter we sketched briefly some of the leaders in the Reformation movement and their basic doctrines which have profoundly affected the faith of the Churches which came into being in the wake of that great upheaval. These are known as the Protestant Churches, though the High Church Anglican generally seems to prefer the term Anglo-Catholic.

A brief outline of some of the basic doctrines of Protestant belief and practice will enable us to understand wherein Protestants generally differ with Catholics. To most Protestants faith is an act of trust and confidence in God, a personal conviction that one is justified or saved by the redemptive merits of Christ's passion and death.

The rule of faith is the norm for determining whether or not a doctrine has been divinely revealed and hence is to be accepted. Most

Protestants hold that the Bible is the sole criterion of divine revelation and that each Christian, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, has the right and duty to decide for himself what has been revealed. This standard of private interpretation is, in practice, modified among many Protestants who maintain that holy Scripture should be interpreted in conformity with the traditions of their Churches, and who subscribe to recognized creeds and professions of faith.

*1. Discuss the differences in various Protestant denominations as you have observed or experienced them. 2. Compare the act of faith as understood by most Protestants and the act of faith of a Catholic. 3. How do Catholics interpret the Bible?*

**THE NATURE OF THE CHURCH: JUSTIFICATION.** Protestants and Catholics are in general agreement that Christ founded a Church while he was on earth. But beyond this fact there is disagreement as to the nature of the Church and the characteristics by which it is to be discerned. Many Protestants consider the Church as an invisible body of which Christ is the head. It is characterized by the personal faith of its members in Christ as Lord and Savior and the preaching of his word to all men.

Following the leadership of Martin Luther, Protestants generally believe that human nature was radically corrupted by the fall and that justification is by grace for Christ's sake through faith. Justification consists in being clothed in the merits of Christ so that God does not advert to sin because of the presence of the redemptive merits of his divine Son.

While there are some 250 Protestant denominations, most American Protestants belong to relatively few denominations. Approximately four out of five in the U. S. A. are members of one of the following groups: Baptists, Methodists, Lutherans, Presbyterians, Protestant Episcopal, the United Church of Christ, or one of the Holiness sects. Let us look at some of the larger groups.

*1. What is our conception of the nature of the Church as founded by Christ? 2. Which Protestant groups predominate in your community or part of the country, and how cordial are relations between them and Catholics?*

**THE BAPTISTS.** The largest of all American denominations, the Baptist Church, was first established by John Smyth near the beginning of the seventeenth century in England. The first Baptist Church in America was founded by Roger Williams at Providence, Rhode Island, in 1639. Baptists are divided into 28 different Churches and sects, the largest of which are the Southern Baptist Convention, the National Baptist Convention of the U. S. A., Inc., and the American Baptist Convention. Baptists have a total of approximately 22 million members.

The vast majority of Baptists believe in the divinity of Christ, original sin, the Trinity, and the existence of a future life of reward or punishment. They have their own distinctive view of baptism, holding

it to be an "ordinance of Christ" rather than a sacrament. Baptism by immersion is held to be a sign that one has decided in favor of salvation offered by Christ. It is reserved for those of an age sufficient to experience faith, which is the sole criterion of salvation.

This experience involves the obligation to a life of virtue, which should stem from a personal understanding of the revelation of God as recorded in holy Scripture. While their religious services differ in form from one congregation to another, the customary features are the reading of Scripture, the singing of hymns, a sermon, and vocal and silent prayer.

*1. Discuss the beliefs and practices of Baptists in your community or among your relatives and friends.*

**THE METHODISTS.** Second in size are the Methodists. Methodism stems from the teaching of John Wesley, an Anglican minister who experienced a new conversion to Christ in 1738. It struck strong roots in this country before the end of the eighteenth century. Of 21 Methodist Churches and sects, The Methodist is the largest, having about 80 percent of American Methodists. There are approximately 12.5 million Methodists in the U. S. A.

Methodists believe in the Trinity, incarnation, passion, and resurrection of Christ, and the last judgment. They reject confession, purgatory, and the invocation of saints. Although Wesley accepted all seven sacraments, baptism and the Lord's Supper are now considered as the only sacraments. While basically Calvinistic in its theology, Methodism denies absolute predestination and holds that Christ died for all men and imparts his grace freely rather than to a certain body of elect souls. John Wesley's distinctive doctrine was the "witness of the Spirit" to the individual soul and the personal assurance of salvation.

Methodists do not regard their holy orders as sacramental, but their clergy are grouped in various classifications or ranks: bishops, deacons, elders, and deaconesses. The episcopacy is a distinct order, and church government is conducted along episcopal, presbyterian, and congregational lines. Four different forms of worship are proposed for use by Methodists, but they are not imposed on congregations. The usual service consists of hymns, readings from Scripture, a sermon, and alternate prayers. Methodists are well known for their zeal for good works, for the welfare of their neighbor, and in furthering civic and social programs.

*1. Comment on the above description of the Methodists in the light of your experience with members of this denomination.*

**THE LUTHERANS.** The Lutheran Church was established in Germany in 1530. Lutherans form the third largest Protestant denomination in the U. S. A., with approximately 8.6 million members. Of these, over 95 percent belong to either The Lutheran Church in America, with 3.2 million; The Lutheran Church — Missouri Synod, with 2.7 million; or The American Lutheran Church, with 2.5 million. The remainder belong to seven smaller bodies.

Lutherans believe that baptism is necessary to salvation, but make allowances in exceptional cases for those who have faith but are denied baptism. The consecrated bread and wine in the Holy Eucharist are the body and blood of Christ. While private confession is not obligatory, it is recommended as highly beneficial. Through the rite of confirmation, which is not considered a sacrament, children and baptized converts are admitted to their first Holy Communion. The worship service commonly follows the following order: introit, Kyrie, Gloria, collect, (Old Testament lesson), epistle, gospel, creed, sermon, offertory, Great Intercession, preface, Sanctus, consecration, Pax, Agnus, distribution of Holy Communion, post-communion, Benedicamus and blessing, with interspersed hymns.

*1. Compare the general pattern of the Lutheran worship service with the structure of the Mass.*

**THE PRESBYTERIANS.** Presbyterians constitute the fourth largest Protestant denomination in the U. S. A. Most of its 4.3 million communicants belong to the United Presbyterian Church of the U. S. A. and the Presbyterian Church in the U. S. There are also more than six smaller groups. Presbyterianism today is the product of the theological thought of John Calvin and of John Knox who modified the former's doctrine of absolute predestination.

Presbyterians have two sacraments: baptism and the Lord's Supper, viewed as seals of the covenant of grace. While baptism is conferred on infants and adults, it is not considered necessary for salvation. The death of an infant before baptism is regarded as a sign of divine election. The Lord's Supper is celebrated infrequently as a memorial of the sacrifice of Christ. In the past Presbyterians have been very restrained in their forms of worship, but are now endeavoring to return in spirit to practices of the early Church through a developing liturgical movement. They have a newly organized and revised ritual for the celebration of the Lord's Supper and their use of baptismal forms have been considerably modified.

*1. What evidences of a developing liturgical movement among non-Catholics have you seen or heard about?*

**THE PROTESTANT EPISCOPAL CHURCH.** Ranking fifth among Protestant denominations in the U. S. A. is the Protestant Episcopal Church with about 3.4 million members. Derived from the Church of England founded in the early years of the Reformation, the Protestant Episcopal Church was established in this country during the Revolutionary period. Its title was adopted at a general convention held in 1789. We have already indicated its three divisions, which bring about considerable variety in Protestant episcopal beliefs and practices. Official statements of faith are found in the Apostles' Creed, the Nicene Creed, and the 39 Articles of the Church of England, though both acceptance and interpretation are not uniform.

The supremacy of holy Scripture is generally recognized, and among certain elements the voice of Tradition is listened to with respect and reverence. While an episcopal system of church government obtains,

clergymen of lower rank as well as lay persons have an active voice in ecclesiastical matters. Liturgical services range from a ceremony similar to the Roman Mass in the High Church to services of a distinctively Protestant form in the Low and Broad Churches.

1. *Comment on the wish of High Church Episcopalian ministers to be known as priests and to be addressed as Father?*

BONDS THAT UNITE US. What common ground does the Catholic Church have with these Churches? Vatican Council II points first to a common belief in Jesus Christ "as God and Lord and as the sole mediator between God and men, to the glory of the one God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit" (DE 20).

Secondly, they share with us a love and reverence for holy Scripture. "While invoking the Holy Spirit," says the *Decree on Ecumenism*, "they seek in these very Scriptures God as it were speaking to them in Christ, whom the prophets foretold, who is the Word of God made flesh for us" (DE 21). Even though they differ with us in not recognizing the authority of the Church to interpret the written word of God, the *Decree* declares: "But sacred Scriptures provide for the work of dialogue an instrument of the highest value in the mighty hand of God for the attainment of that unity which the Savior holds out to all" (DE 21). We all believe with St. Paul that the gospel "is the power of God unto salvation to everyone who believes, to Jew first, and then to Greek" (Rom 1:16).

Thirdly, through the reception of baptism all Christians are incorporated into the crucified and glorified Christ and are reborn through the sharing of his divine life. "For you were buried together with him in baptism," says St. Paul, "and in him also rose again through faith in the working of God who raised him from the dead" (Col 2:12). Hence baptism is the sacramental bond uniting all Christians and making us brothers — children of a common heavenly Father. But baptism is only a beginning, as the *Decree* points out, for it is entirely directed toward acquiring the fullness of life in Christ (DE 22).

1. *Discuss some of the bonds that unite Catholics and Protestants:*  
a. *common articles of belief; b. a love and reverence for holy Scripture;*  
c. *the sacrament of baptism.*

## SOME THINGS TO DO

1. As time and opportunity permit, read some of the other official pronouncements of the Second Vatican Council, noting especially passages which have a bearing on ecumenism.
2. Give a copy of the *Decree on Ecumenism* to some of your non-Catholic friends who are devout and practical members of their respective Churches.

# XV

## NINE STEPS TOWARD UNITY

A fourth ground for fruitful ecumenical dialogue with our separated brethren, the *Decree on Ecumenism* points out, is the Lord's Supper. They have not, the Church believes, preserved the eucharistic mystery in its fullness, particularly because of the lack of the sacrament of orders; nevertheless, when they commemorate Christ's death and resurrection in the Holy Supper, "they profess that it signifies life in communion with Christ and look forward to his coming in glory" (DE 22).

Virtually all Christians consider the Lord's Supper as the heart of worship and the great sacrament of unity. It is a source of universal regret that differences concerning the doctrine involved have prevented the sacrament from achieving its unifying purpose. Sincere and sustained dialogue has already lessened some of the divergence.

Thus in commenting upon the statement issued by the Faith and Order Theological Commission at Bossey, Switzerland, in 1963, the noted French Dominican theologian, Father Yves Congar, said: "Very positive agreement, as unexpected by Catholics as it was joyously welcomed, was reached between the Lutherans and Reformed in favor of the sacrificial character of the Eucharist. Once the bogey of repetition has been removed, Protestant thought will admit that the Eucharist incorporates our sacrifice and is the memorial of Christ's own unique sacrifice."

*1. Discuss reasons why the Lord's Supper should provide ground for fruitful ecumenical dialogue.*

**FURTHER GROUNDS FOR DIALOGUE.** A fifth ground for dialogue, the *Decree on Ecumenism* notes, is the Christian life and worship of our separated brethren. Nourished by faith in the Lord Jesus, their way of life is strengthened by the grace of baptism and the devout hearing of the word of God. Their practice of private prayer, of meditating upon the Scriptures, and their public worship of God further deepen their spiritual life.

Furthermore, their Christian faith expresses itself in good works. Their lively sense of justice and true charity has brought into being many organizations for the relief of material and spiritual distress, the advancement of education, the improvement of social conditions, and the promotion of world peace. They have found in Christ's word a fruitful source of Christian virtue and have hearkened to the words of the Apostle Paul: "Whatever you do in word or in work, do all in the name of the

Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him" (Col 3:17).

1. *From your contacts with non-Catholic relatives and friends, what comments would you make on their "Christian life and worship"? 2. Discuss some of the works of justice and charity carried on by our separated brethren, especially in your own community.*

CHRISTIAN UNITY SURPASSES THE POWER OF MAN. The *Decree* counsels the faithful to be guided in their ecumenical activity by the Church and to abstain from frivolousness and imprudent zeal. They must be loyal to the teachings of Christ, the apostles, and the Fathers of the Church and aid it in achieving that fullness to which the Lord Jesus wishes his body to grow.

The Council realizes that the reconciliation of all Christians in the unity of the one and only Church of Christ surpasses the power of man, and places its hope in the prayer of Christ, the love of the Father, and the power of the Holy Spirit. "And hope," says the Apostle Paul, "does not disappoint, because the charity of God is poured forth in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who has been given to us" (Rom 5:5). With these words of encouragement from the great Apostle to the Gentiles, the *Decree on Ecumenism* concludes.

1. *Why must ecumenical activities of Catholics be guided by the Church? 2. Explain why we should continue to work for the unity of all Christians even though such an objective seems remote or, in some ways, well-nigh impossible?*

PRAYER, REPENTANCE, FORGIVENESS. Let us now see how we can put into practice the various proposals and suggestions of the *Decree on Ecumenism* for the promotion of Christian unity. In a chapter in the symposium *Steps to Christian Unity*, Dr. Robert McAfee Brown, professor of theology at Stanford University and an observer at Vatican Council II, outlines nine steps leading to unity, which we shall summarize briefly.

1. *Our concerns about Christian unity must be steeped in the life of prayer, which is always the "next step" toward greater unity.* This emphasis upon the primacy and necessity of prayer to achieve a goal that transcends human power echoes the emphasis sounded in the concluding paragraph of the *Decree*. Dr. Brown tells how he discovered that prayer for one another can gradually, through the power of the Holy Spirit, be transformed into prayer *with* one another. The Protestant observers met twice a week in a Methodist Church to pray *for* the Council. But every morning they were also present at Mass at St. Peter's and found themselves more and more engaged in praying *with* the Council.

2. *A second step to Christian unity is a common acknowledgment of our guilt for the events that separated us in the past.* Catholics have generally been hesitant to shoulder some responsibility for the rifts which divide Christendom. Since Vatican Council II this should no longer be true, for Pope Paul VI set forth mutual confession and mutual pardon as the conditions of ecumenical progress. Referring to the separation of Christians one from another, His Holiness in his opening allocution on



September 29, 1963, said: "If we are in any way to blame for that separation, we humbly beg God's forgiveness and ask pardon too of our brethren who feel themselves to have been injured by us. For our part, we willingly forgive the injuries which the Catholic Church has suffered, and forget the grief endured during the long series of dissensions and separations."

*1. Discuss the primacy and importance of prayer in efforts to achieve Christian unity. 2. Why should Catholics admit that they, too, have some responsibility for the disunity that prevails among the followers of Christ?*

INNER RENEWAL: CANDOR AND HONESTY. *3. Another step toward unity is the attempt to engage in inner renewal. Instead of each group pointing to the faults of the other, it will be more profitable to purge itself of its own imperfections. Indeed the primary objective of Vatican Council II was to bring about a profound interior renewal of the Church's life so that she would shine forth, as St. Paul says, "in all her glory, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she might be holy and without blemish" (Eph 5:27). Scorning the note of "triumphalism" so often sounded in the past, Vatican II strove with candor and humility to remove the blemishes which have impaired the Church's beauty.*

*4. We must be clear about the nature of the unity we do and do not share.* By virtue of baptism we are brethren, united with Christ and in some sense with the Church. But we are also separated because of our many differences in doctrine. Here are both the glory and the agony of our situation. Patiently and prayerfully we must concentrate on that true unity of faith for which Christ so fervently prayed. Hence theologians on both sides must re-examine all important points of doctrine and worship in the light of tradition and especially of holy Scripture. By facing these problems with candor and honesty we shall, with God's grace, draw ever closer together in faith and worship until the gap is bridged.

*1. What is meant by "triumphalism" in the Church? 2. What is meant by the "glory and the agony" of the situation in which we find ourselves with regard to Christian unity?*

GETTING TO KNOW ONE ANOTHER. *5. Since we are separated brothers, one of our basic tasks is to become better acquainted. This entails exploration, at all levels, of the things we share and the things that divide us. Theologians on both sides must collaborate in these investigations. Priests and ministers must come together for discussion and prayer; Catholic seminarians must meet with their Protestant counterparts; laymen in local parishes must become acquainted and work together not only in civic enterprises but also in undertakings for the moral and spiritual improvement of their community.*

Even on a deeper level, they must come together to learn where their respective creeds agree and where they differ. Dr. Brown tells of the pleasure and enlightenment which such groups have experienced in discussing books like Hans Küng's *The Council, Reform and Reunion*.

Here the purpose is to explain and learn, not to argue or convert. Other books that have yielded great satisfaction are *An American Dialogue* by Dr. Brown and Father Gustave Weigel, S.J., and *Steps to Christian Unity*, edited by John A. O'Brien.

The road to Christian unity is a long one, but friendship between Protestants and Catholics at all levels is the first and indispensable step. Indeed one of the precious fruits of Vatican II was the friendships formed between the Protestant observers and many of the Council Fathers.

*1. What efforts have been made by Catholics and non-Catholics in your community to get better acquainted, and with what results?*

#### RESTUDY OF HISTORY AND JOINT STUDY OF THE BIBLE.

*6. Sometimes it is an awareness of the issues that divide us at present that can force us to a reassessment of the past.* Each side needs to restudy its own history. By looking at the past and endeavoring to examine where we came from, we frequently come to a better understanding of where we are, and how our present posture was taken. Dr. Brown reports hearing one bishop on the Council floor say that Catholics must recognize that the Reformers' intention was not a disruption of the Church but a recovery of the gospel.

Similarly, Dr. Brown states, the traditional Protestant polemic against Catholic liturgy as a form of magic is being gradually replaced by a more responsible attempt to understand why the Mass is so central to Catholic faith and worship. This is leading them to see that "the charge of 'magic' doesn't fit anymore, if it ever did." In short, an examination of our differences must include a willingness to scrutinize anew past reasons for those divergences, in the hope that we can gradually remove at least some of them.

*7. Joint Protestant-Catholic Bible study groups bring both groups closer together.* In France there are more than 200 such study groups and the number is steadily growing. In the U. S. A. we have scarcely begun to explore the fruitful possibilities of such joint action. With 66 books of the Bible shared in common, we have enough to occupy us for many years. We are both agreed that in a unique way God has spoken to men through the Scriptures, that they are the fountainhead of our faith and that within them we find the Bread of Life. Our top Biblical scholars are engaged in such joint study and it is important now to institute this on the parish level.

*1. What fruits may be expected of an open-minded, impartial restudy of our religious history? 2. What may we hope to gain by studying the Bible together with our separated brethren?*

JOINT SHARING OF CIVIC RESPONSIBILITIES. *8. We can join forces in the sharing of our common civic responsibilities.* We do not need to agree on all the items of faith and worship to agree that the color of a man's skin is an irrelevance to God and to all who call themselves God's children. No Christian, faithful to the teachings of Christ, can sanction discrimination against fellow citizens because of

differences of race, color, or creed. Collaboration in the struggle for racial, social, and economic justice will carry over to the struggle for Christian unity.

*9. The dialogue must persist even when we come to the basic differences. Unity will come only as Protestants and Catholics move out toward one another, recognizing that after their confrontation, neither will be quite the same as before the encounter took place.*

*1. Discuss some of the social problems in your community in the solution of which Catholics and non-Catholics might well cooperate.*

*2. Why will neither Catholics nor non-Catholics be quite the same after sincere ecumenical encounter has taken place?*

### SOME THINGS TO DO

1. Pray daily for the reunion of Christendom, pray with your separated brethren when there is occasion to do so, and make sincere efforts to become better acquainted with non-Catholics, as non-Catholics.
2. Discuss with the members of your group and with your priest moderator the possibility of forming a Bible study group with some of your non-Catholic friends.

## XVI PUTTING ECUMENISM INTO PRACTICE

In *Steps to Christian Unity* John Cogley formulates ten commandments for the promotion of Christian unity. A former executive editor of *The Commonweal*, Mr. Cogley has long been active in interfaith activities sponsored by the National Conference of Christians and Jews. Father Gustave Weigel, S.J., was the pioneering leader among the priests of the U. S. A. in the ecumenical movement: John Cogley has played a similar role among the Catholic laity. Prompted by Dr. Brown's rules for the dialogue, Mr. Cogley formulates ten commandments for promoting Christian unity, addressed especially to the laity. We shall summarize them briefly.

*1. Remember that saints and sinners are to be found in all branches of Christianity.* In the past it was not uncommon for Catholic apologists to depict Martin Luther chiefly as a proud, stubborn, sensuous, and disobedient monk who broke not only his vows but the unity of Christendom. Protestant writers portrayed him as the saintly heroic champion of religious truth and freedom, the valiant warrior against monastic corruption and superstition. The lay ecumenist must rid his mind of such stereotypes.

1. *What is the main weakness of such stereotypes as the ones of Martin Luther described above?*

IN TRUTH AND CHARITY. 2. *Do not look to conversion as the proper result of ecumenism.* Here exposition and understanding, not argument and controversy, are in order. Unless the primary effort is to promote mutual understanding, the dialogue is doomed in advance.

3. *Do not attempt to achieve charity at the expense of truth.* True unity is not promoted by glossing over real differences. This is the "false irenicism" against which both Vatican II and the pope have warned all who engage in the dialogue.

4. *Do not attempt to serve truth at the expense of charity.* Unless a discussion is carried on in a spirit of kindness and love, it will yield little fruit. In all our dealings with those of a different faith we must show a sensitivity to their feelings and be unfailingly courteous, polite, and considerate.

1. *Why should we not suspend efforts at conversion of others, especially the uncommitted, during this time of ecumenical endeavor?* 2. *Discuss the imprudence of:* a. *trying to achieve charity at the expense of truth;* b. *trying to serve truth at the expense of charity.*

MUTUAL RESPECT AND HONESTY. 5. *Do not question another's sincerity or lightly impute superstition, ignorance, or fear in order to explain why they believe as they do.* It is hazardous and usually unfair to impute unworthy motives to a person who differs with us. It renders any discussion sterile and brings the ecumenical effort to a speedy end.

6. *Respect what others deem holy.* The ecumenical spirit requires that the rites, ceremonies, customs, hymns, symbols, and usages revered in any religious tradition, be spoken of with respect by those of a different religious background.

7. *Don't defend the indefensible.* The religious history of both Catholics and Protestants contains many acts of intolerance, persecution, and cruelty. Neither truth nor the cause of Christian unity is advanced by trying to whitewash such villainy. In a little talk to the Protestant observers at Vatican Council II, Pope John said: "We do not intend to conduct a trial of the past; we do not want to prove who was right or who was wrong. The blame is on both sides. All we want is to say: 'Let us come together. Let us make an end of our divisions.'"

1. *Why is it usually disastrous to impute unworthy motives to one who differs from us?* 2. *How can we sincerely respect religious rites, ceremonies, etc., of our separated brethren?* 3. *Comment on Pope John's statement to the Protestant observers.*

WORK AND PRAY TOGETHER. 8. *Work together for the common good, as citizens equal before the law.* There are many goals, such as peace, civil rights, public education, abolition of poverty, community betterment, for which Protestants and Catholics can work shoulder to shoulder. In so doing, we create a climate of friendship in which the ecumenical spirit thrives.

9. *Pray together.* The importance of this can scarcely be over-emphasized. Since all Christians turn to God for aid in difficulties, why should not Catholics and Protestants find increasing opportunities to join in public prayer and thus strengthen the bond of Christian fellowship?

10. *Leave theology to the theologians.* There are many difficult and abstruse questions of theology and Biblical exegesis which call for an expertise not to be expected in those unversed in these fields. Prudence dictates that such questions be left to the experts. There are, however, large areas of religion and Scripture which Catholic and Protestant lay people can study together and discuss with great profit.

1. *Do you think that priests and religious should take part in public demonstrations, such as those for civil rights?* 2. *What procedure should Catholics follow if non-Catholics wish to discuss difficult theological questions?*

**ADDITIONAL WAYS OF PROMOTING CHRISTIAN UNITY.**  
Let us now enumerate some additional ways of promoting Christian unity.

1. The annual Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, January 18 to 25, offers a splendid opportunity for Protestants and Catholics to join in simple devotional services — prayers, hymns, and homily — in local churches. The nationwide response to this ecumenical activity is already most encouraging and is worthy of the participation of every Christian. Samples of approved prayers and special material have been jointly prepared by the Franciscan Friars of the Atonement, Graymoor, Garrison, New York, and the National Council of Churches, 475 Riverside Drive, New York, N. Y.

2. **Parish Open House.** The custom of inviting the general public to visit on successive Sunday afternoons a Protestant church, a Catholic church, and a synagogue or temple, meet the pastor and parishioners, and be taken on a tour through the church plant is spreading across the nation. It makes for interfaith friendship and understanding, and hence is also called Operation Understanding.

3. **Participate in neighborhood or city-wide interfaith conferences on community social problems** such as race, education, delinquency, poverty, urban renewal, relocation. These not only promote interfaith collaboration but also bring the values and forces of religious faith to bear on community problems. Further information: National Council of Catholic Men, NCWC, 1312 Massachusetts Avenue, N.W., Washington, D. C. 20005.

1. *How is the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity observed in your community?* 2. *What contribution do you think the laity can make to the Parish Open House?* 3. *Why and how should the "values and forces of religious faith" be brought to bear on civic problems?*

**ECUMENICAL MEETINGS IN HOMES.** 4. **The Living Room Dialogue.** The object is to foster neighborhood ecumenical discussion groups among Christian laity. Such dialogues enable Christians to learn and appreciate how much they have in common as well as to discover the chief

issues which still divide us. The simple program of common prayer, Scriptural reading, and study fosters personal concern and prayer for Christian unity among the participating couples. Further information and materials: *Living Room Dialogues*, jointly published by Paulist Press and National Council of Churches, 1965, Father William Greenspun, C.S.P., National Center, C.C.D., 1312 Massachusetts Avenues, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20005.

5. Evenings of Christian Friendship. Similar to the preceding, this program brings together couples of different faiths to promote understanding and to find areas for joint activity in work and prayer. Meeting in each other's homes, small groups of Catholic, Orthodox, and Protestant laity, men and women, single and married, of different races and age groups, explore what binds Christians together and what divides them. Further information: Worcester Diocesan Council of Catholic Men, Robert Fouhy, Executive Secretary; Father Greenspun, National Center, C.C.D.

1. *Discuss the feasibility of such neighborhood meetings as Living Room Dialogues and Evenings of Christian Friendship in your community.*

TV, RADIO, MOVIES, AND PLAYS. 6. Jointly sponsored local television and radio programs. Such programs generally feature a priest and clergy of other denominations and have proven fruitful in many dioceses, e.g., Baltimore, San Francisco, and Portland, Oregon. Further information: Father Joseph M. Connolly, Baltimore Archdiocesan Ecumenical Commission; also, NCCM Radio and Television Department, New York.

1. *How interested do you think people are in religious TV and radio programs?* 2. *What standards should be maintained in the production of religious films and plays?*

CENTERS FOR JOINT ECUMENICAL ENDEAVORS. 8. Collaboration in establishing common facilities among interested denominations for dealing with certain common social problems, such as rehabilitation of alcoholics, restoration of convicts to normal life, and care for the emotionally disturbed and unwed mothers. Further information: Father Raymond Bosler, Indianapolis, *Criterion*, and Indianapolis Archdiocesan Council of Catholic Men.

9. Establishment of an ecumenical center for city, state, or diocese. This can be a Catholic effort or jointly sponsored with other denominations. Such a center was established by Cardinal Leger of Montreal in October, 1963, and has proven fruitful. Further information: Father Ireneé Beaubien, S.J., director of Montreal Ecumenical Center, Montreal, P. Q., Canada.

10. Joint ecumenical collection of offerings for the relief of the poor in each other's parishes. This proposal was first made by the noted Scriptural scholar, Dr. Oscar Cullmann, as an adjunct to the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity. It has been supported by Catholic bishops

in Europe, where the program has been put into successful operation. The program has been introduced into this country and promises to become widely adopted.

*1. Relate any experiences you may have had with joint efforts of Catholics and non-Catholics to help afflicted and needy persons. 2. What do you think of the possibilities of such a program as that described in No. 10 above?*

**RELAXING SOCIAL TENSIONS.** 11. Relaxing social tensions. The new warmth between Protestants and Catholics is reflected in the increasing acts of friendly cooperation between the Knights of Columbus and the Masons. Cardinal Cushing was the featured speaker at a Masonic Lodge in Boston; Bishop Joyce of Burlington, Vermont, addressed a large meeting of the Masons of Connecticut; and Bishop Pursley of Fort Wayne-South Bend spoke to an impressive gathering of Masons in the Scottish Rite Cathedral in South Bend. The writer addressed the state conventions — called Councils of Deliberation — of the Scottish Rite Masons of Illinois, Indiana, and Ohio.

The Knights of Columbus in many cities have held a joint Open House with the members of the local Masonic Lodge. A group of 40 students from Our Lady of the Lake Seminary, Syracuse, Indiana, was driven to Chicago Shrine Hospital for Crippled Children. "This concrete example of Roman Catholic charity," commented Editor John G. Fleck in the Masonic monthly *News Letter*, "should warm the heart of every Mason. It seems that we really are brothers under the skin."

12. Participate in the activities of the Y.M.C.A., the Y.W.C.A., the Chamber of Commerce, the Red Cross, Kiwanis, Rotary, Lions, Elks, and other similar social and civic organizations. This is in line with the policy of many dioceses to encourage priests to join the local Ministerial or Religious Workers' Association. The more freely we mingle with our separated brethren in all these associations, the more effective will be our efforts to foster friendship and understanding and thus pave the way for Christian unity.

*1. What examples have you observed of joint action by such societies as the Knights of Columbus and the Masons? 2. How active are Catholics of your community in social and civic organizations, and does such participation help to pave the way for Christian unity?*

### SOME THINGS TO DO

1. If you take part in any ecumenical activities, try to put into effect the 10 commandments formulated by John Cogley.
2. Discuss the 12 additional ways of promoting Christian unity as set forth above, and consider practical ways of putting one or more of them into operation in your community.

**PAUL, BISHOP,  
SERVANT OF THE SERVANTS OF  
GOD TOGETHER WITH THE  
FATHERS OF THE SACRED  
COUNCIL**

**FOR A PERMANENT RECORD  
OF THE MATTER**

**DECREE ON  
ECUMENISM**

**INTRODUCTION**

1. The RESTORATION OF UNITY among all Christians is one of the principal concerns of the Second Vatican Council. Christ the Lord founded one Church and one Church only. However, many Christian communions present themselves to men as the true inheritors of Jesus Christ; all indeed profess to be followers of the Lord but differ in mind and go their different ways, as if Christ Himself were divided.<sup>1</sup> Such division openly contradicts the will of Christ, scandalizes the world, and damages the holy cause of preaching the Gospel to every creature.

But the Lord of Ages wisely and patiently follows out the plan of grace on our behalf, sinners that we are. In recent times more than ever before, He has been rousing divided Christians to remorse over their divisions and to a longing for unity. Everywhere large numbers have felt the impulse of this grace, and among our separated brethren also there increases from day to day the movement, fostered by the grace of the Holy Spirit, for the restoration of unity among all Christians. This movement toward unity is called "ecumenical." Those belong to it who invoke the Triune God and confess Jesus as Lord and Saviour, doing this not merely as individuals but also as corporate bodies. For almost everyone regards the body in which he has heard the Gospel as his Church and, indeed, God's Church. All however, though in different ways, long for the one visible Church of God, a Church truly universal and sent forth into the world that the world may be converted to the Gospel and so be saved, to the glory of God.

The Sacred Council gladly notes all this. It has already declared its teaching on the Church, and now, moved by a desire for the restoration of unity among all the followers of Christ, it wishes to set before all Catholics the ways and means by which they too can respond to this grace and to this divine call.

**CHAPTER I**

**CATHOLIC PRINCIPLES ON ECUMENISM**

2. What has revealed the love of God among us is that the Father has sent into the world His only-begotten Son, so that, being made man, He might by His redemption give new life to the entire human race and unify it.<sup>2</sup> Before offering Himself up as a spotless victim upon the altar, Christ prayed to His Father for all who believe in Him: "that they all may be one; even as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us, so that the world may believe that thou has sent me".<sup>3</sup> In His Church He instituted the wonderful sacrament of the Eucharist by which the unity of His Church is both signified and made a reality. He gave His followers a new commandment to love one another,<sup>4</sup> and promised the



Spirit, their Advocate,<sup>5</sup> who, as Lord and life-giver, should remain with them forever.

After being lifted up on the cross and glorified, the Lord Jesus poured forth His Spirit as He had promised, and through the Spirit He has called and gathered together the people of the New Covenant, who are the Church, into a unity of faith, hope and charity, as the Apostle teaches us: "There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to the one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one Baptism".<sup>6</sup> For "all you who have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ . . . for you are all one in Christ Jesus".<sup>7</sup> It is the Holy Spirit, dwelling in those who believe and pervading and ruling over the Church as a whole, who brings about that wonderful communion of the faithful. He brings them into intimate union with Christ, so that He is the principle of the Church's unity. The distribution of graces and offices is His work too,<sup>8</sup> enriching the Church of Jesus Christ with different functions "in order to equip the saints for the work of service, so as to build up the body of Christ".<sup>9</sup>

In order to establish this His holy Church everywhere in the world till the end of time, Christ entrusted to the College of the Twelve the task of teaching, ruling and sanctifying.<sup>10</sup> Among their number He selected Peter, and after his confession of faith determined that on him He would build His Church. Also to Peter He promised the keys of the kingdom of heaven,<sup>11</sup> and after His profession of love, entrusted all His sheep to him to be confirmed in faith<sup>12</sup> and shepherded in perfect unity.<sup>13</sup> Christ Jesus Himself was forever to remain the chief cornerstone<sup>14</sup> and shepherd of our souls.<sup>15</sup>

Jesus Christ, then, willed that the apostles and their successors — the bishops with Peter's successor at their head — should preach the Gospel faithfully, administer the sacraments, and rule the Church in love. It is thus, under the action of the Holy Spirit, that Christ wills His people to increase, and He perfects His people's fellowship in unity: in their confessing the one faith, celebrating divine worship in common, and keeping the fraternal harmony of the family of God.

The Church, then, is God's only flock; it is like a standard lifted high for the nations to see it:<sup>16</sup> for it serves all mankind through the Gospel of peace<sup>17</sup> as it makes its pilgrim way in hope toward the goal of the fatherland above.<sup>18</sup>

This is the sacred mystery of the unity of the Church, in Christ and through Christ, the Holy Spirit energizing its various functions. It is a mystery that finds its highest exemplar and source in the unity of the Persons of the Trinity: the Father and the Son in the Holy Spirit, one God.

3. Even in the beginnings of this one and only Church of God there arose certain rifts,<sup>19</sup> which the Apostle strongly condemned.<sup>20</sup> But in subsequent centuries much more serious dissensions made their appearance and quite large communities came to be separated from full communion with the Catholic Church — for which, often enough, men of both sides were to blame. The children who are born into these Communities and who grow up believing in Christ cannot be accused of the sin involved in the separation, and the Catholic Church embraces upon them as brothers, with respect and affection. For men who believe in Christ and have been truly baptized are in communion with the Catholic Church even though this communion is imperfect. The differences that exist in varying degrees between them and the Catholic Church — whether in doctrine and sometimes in discipline, or concerning the structure of the Church — do indeed create many obstacles, sometimes serious ones, to full ecclesiastical communion. The ecumenical movement is striving to overcome these obstacles. But even in spite of them it remains true that all who have been justified by faith in Baptism are members of Christ's Body,<sup>21</sup> and have a right to be called Christian, and so are correctly accepted as brothers by the children of the Catholic Church.<sup>22</sup>

Moreover, some and even very many of the significant elements and endowments which together go to build up and give life to the Church itself, can exist outside the visible boundaries of the Catholic Church: the written word of God; the life of grace; faith, hope and charity, with the other interior gifts of the Holy Spirit, and visible elements too. All of these, which come from Christ and lead back to Christ, belong by right to the one Church of Christ.

The brethren divided from us also use many liturgical actions of the Christian religion. These most certainly can truly engender a life of grace in ways that vary according to the condition of each Church or Community. These liturgical actions must be regarded as capable of giving access to the community of salvation.

It follows that the separated Churches<sup>23</sup> and Communities as such, though we believe them to be deficient in some respects, have been by no means deprived of significance and importance in the mystery of salvation. For the Spirit of Christ has not refrained from using them as means of salvation which derive their efficacy from the very fullness of grace and truth entrusted to the Church.

Nevertheless, our separated brethren, whether considered as individuals or as Communities and Churches, are not blessed with that unity which Jesus Christ wished to bestow on all those who through Him were born again into one body, and with Him quickened to newness of life — that unity which the Holy Scriptures and the ancient Tradition of the Church proclaim. For it is only through Christ's Catholic Church, which is "the all-embracing means of salvation," that they can benefit fully from the means of salvation. We believe that Our Lord entrusted all the blessings of the New Covenant to the apostolic college alone, of which Peter is the head, in order to establish the one Body of Christ on earth to which all should be fully incorporated who belong in any way to the people of God. This people of God, though still in its members liable to sin, is ever growing in Christ during its pilgrimage on earth, and is guided by God's gentle wisdom, according to His hidden designs, until it shall happily arrive at the fullness of eternal glory in the heavenly Jerusalem.

4. Today, in many parts of the world, under the inspiring grace of the Holy Spirit, many efforts are being made in prayer, word and action to attain that fullness of unity which Jesus Christ desires. The Sacred Council exhorts all the Catholic faithful to recognize the signs of the times and to take an active and intelligent part in the work of ecumenism.

The term "ecumenical movement" indicates the initiatives and activities planned and undertaken, according to the various needs of the Church and as opportunities offer, to promote Christian unity. These are: first, every effort to avoid expressions, judgments and actions which do not represent the condition of our separated brethren with truth and fairness and so make mutual relations with them more difficult; then, "dialogue" between competent experts from different Churches and Communities. At these meetings, which are organized in a religious spirit, each explains the teaching of his Communion in greater depth and brings out clearly its distinctive features. In such dialogue, everyone gains a truer knowledge and more just appreciation of the teaching and religious life of both Communions. In addition, the way is prepared for cooperation between them in the duties for the common good of humanity which are demanded by every Christian conscience; and, wherever this is allowed, there is prayer in common. Finally, all are led to examine their own faithfulness to Christ's will for the Church and accordingly to undertake with vigor the task of renewal and reform.

When such actions are undertaken prudently and patiently by the Catholic faithful, with the attentive guidance of their bishops, they promote justice and truth, concord and collaboration, as well as the spirit of brotherly love and unity.

This is the way that, when the obstacles to perfect ecclesiastical communion have been gradually overcome, all Christians will at last, in a common celebration of the Eucharist, be gathered into the one and only Church in that unity which Christ bestowed on His Church from the beginning. We believe that this unity subsists in the Catholic Church as something she can never lose, and we hope that it will continue to increase until the end of time.

However, it is evident that, when individuals wish for full Catholic communion, their preparation and reconciliation is an undertaking which of its nature is distinct from ecumenical action. But there is no opposition between the two, since both proceed from the marvelous ways of God.

Catholics, in their ecumenical work, must assuredly be concerned for their separated brethren, praying for them, keeping them informed about the Church, making the first approaches toward them. But their primary duty is to make a careful and honest appraisal of whatever needs to be done or renewed in the Catholic household itself, in order that its life may bear witness more clearly and faithfully to the teachings and institutions which have come to it from Christ through the Apostles.

For although the Catholic Church has been endowed with all divinely revealed truth and with all means of grace, yet its members fail to live by them with all the fervor that they should, so that the radiance of the Church's image is less clear in the eyes of our separated brethren and of the world at large, and the growth of God's kingdom is delayed. All Catholics must therefore aim at Christian perfection<sup>24</sup> and, each according to his station, play his part that the Church may daily be more purified and renewed. For the Church must bear in her own body the humility and dying of Jesus,<sup>25</sup> against the day when Christ will present her to Himself in all her glory without spot or wrinkle.<sup>26</sup>

All in the Church must preserve unity in essentials. But let all, according to the gifts they have received, enjoy a proper freedom, in their various forms of spiritual life and discipline, in their different liturgical rites, and even in their theological elaborations of revealed truth. In all things let charity prevail. If they are true to this course of action, they will be giving ever better expression to the authentic catholicity and apostolicity of the Church.

On the other hand, Catholics must gladly acknowledge and esteem the truly Christian endowments from our common heritage which are to be found among our separated brethren. It is right and salutary to recognize the riches of Christ and virtuous works in the lives of others who are bearing witness to Christ, sometimes even to the shedding of their blood. For God is always wonderful in His works and worthy of all praise.

Nor should we forget that anything wrought by the grace of the Holy Spirit in the hearts of our separated brethren can be a help to our own edification. Whatever is truly Christian is never contrary to what genuinely belongs to the faith; indeed, it can always bring a deeper realization of the mystery of Christ and the Church.

Nevertheless, the divisions among Christians prevent the Church from attaining the fullness of catholicity proper to her, in those of her sons who, though attached to her by Baptism, are yet separated from full communion with her. Furthermore, the Church herself finds it more difficult to express in actual life her full catholicity in all her bearings.

This Sacred Council is gratified to note that the participation by the Catholic faithful in ecumenical work is growing daily. It commends this work to the bishops everywhere in the world to be vigorously stimulated by them and guided with prudence.

## CHAPTER II

### THE PRACTICE OF ECUMENISM

5. The attainment of union is the concern of the whole Church, faithful and shepherds alike. This concern extends to everyone, according to his talent, whether it be exercised in his daily Christian life or in his theological and historical research. This concern itself reveals already to some extent the bond of brotherhood between all Christians and it helps toward that full and perfect unity which God in His kindness wills.

6. Every renewal of the Church<sup>27</sup> is essentially grounded in an increase of fidelity to her own calling. Undoubtedly this is the basis of the movement toward unity.

Christ summons the Church to continual reformation as she sojourns here on earth. The Church is always in need of this, in so far as she is an institution of men here on earth. Thus if, in various times and circumstances, there have been deficiencies in moral conduct or in church discipline, or even in the way that church teaching has been formulated—to be carefully distinguished from the deposit of faith itself—these can and should be set right at the opportune moment.

Church renewal has therefore notable ecumenical importance. Already in various spheres of the Church's life, this renewal is taking place. The Biblical and liturgical movements, the preaching of the word of God and catechetics, the apostolate of the laity, new forms of religious life and the spirituality of married life, and the Church's social teaching and activity—all these should be considered as pledges and signs of the future progress of ecumenism.

7. There can be no ecumenism worthy of the name without a change of heart. For it is from renewal of the inner life of our minds,<sup>28</sup> from self-denial and an unstinted love that desires of unity take their rise and develop in a mature way. We should therefore pray to the Holy Spirit for the grace to be genuinely self-denying, humble, gentle in the service of others, and to have an attitude of brotherly generosity towards them. St. Paul says: "I, therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, beg you to lead a life worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all humility and meekness, with patience, forbearing one another in love, eager to maintain the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace".<sup>29</sup> This exhortation is directed especially to those raised to sacred Orders precisely that the work of Christ may be continued. He came among us "not to be served but to serve".<sup>30</sup>

The words of St. John hold good about sins against unity: "If we say we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us".<sup>31</sup> So we humbly beg pardon of God and of our separated brethren, just as we forgive them that trespass against us.

All the faithful should remember that the more effort they make to live holier lives according to the Gospel, the better will they further Christian unity and put it into practice. For the closer their union with the Father, the Word, and the Spirit, the more deeply and easily will they be able to grow in mutual brotherly love.

8. This change of heart and holiness of life, along with public and private prayer for the unity of Christians, should be regarded as the soul of the whole ecumenical movement, and merits the name, "spiritual ecumenism."

It is a recognized custom for Catholics to have frequent recourse to that prayer for the unity of the Church with which the Saviour Himself on the eve of His death

so fervently appealed to His Father: "That they may all be one".<sup>32</sup>

In certain special circumstances, such as the prescribed prayers "for unity," and during ecumenical gatherings, it is allowable, indeed desirable that Catholics should join in prayer with their separated brethren. Such prayers in common are certainly an effective means of obtaining the grace of unity, and they are a true expression of the ties which still bind Catholics to their separated brethren. "For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them".<sup>33</sup>

Yet worship in common (*communicatio in sacris*) is not to be considered as a means to be used indiscriminately for the restoration of Christian unity. There are two main principles governing the practice of such common worship: first, the bearing witness to the unity of the Church, and second, the sharing in the means of grace. Witness to the unity of the Church very generally forbids common worship to Christians, but the grace to be had from it sometimes commends this practice. The course to be adopted, with due regard to all the circumstances of time, place, and persons, is to be decided by local episcopal authority, unless otherwise provided for by the Bishops' Conference according to its statutes, or by the Holy See.

9. We must get to know the outlook of our separated brethren. To achieve this purpose, study is of necessity required, and this must be pursued with a sense of realism and good will. Catholics, who already have a proper grounding, need to acquire a more adequate understanding of the respective doctrines of our separated brethren, their history, their spiritual and liturgical life, their religious psychology and general background. Most valuable for this purpose are meetings of the two sides—especially for discussion of theological problems—where each can treat with the other on an equal footing—provided that those who take part in them are truly competent and have the approval of the bishops. From such dialogue will emerge still more clearly what the situation of the Catholic Church really is. In this way too the outlook of our separated brethren will be better understood, and our own belief more aptly explained.

10. Sacred theology and other branches of knowledge, especially of an historical nature, must be taught with due regard for the ecumenical point of view, so that they may correspond more exactly with the facts.

It is most important that future shepherds and priests should have mastered a theology that has been carefully worked out in this way and not polemically, especially with regard to those aspects which concern the relations of separated brethren with the Catholic Church.

This importance is the greater because the instruction and spiritual formation of the faithful and of religious depends so largely on the formation which their priests have received.

Moreover, Catholics engaged in missionary work in the same territories as other Christians ought to know, particularly in these times, the problems and the benefits in their apostolate which derive from the ecumenical movement.

11. The way and method in which the Catholic faith is expressed should never become an obstacle to dialogue with our brethren. It is, of course, essential that the doctrine should be clearly presented in its entirety. Nothing is so foreign to the spirit of ecumenism as a false irenicism, in which the purity of Catholic doctrine suffers loss and its genuine and certain meaning is clouded.

At the same time, the Catholic faith must be explained more profoundly and precisely, in such a way and in such terms as our separated brethren can also really understand.

Moreover, in ecumenical dialogue, Catholic theologians standing fast by the teaching of the Church and investigating the divine mysteries with the separated brethren must proceed with love for the truth, with charity, and with humility. When comparing doctrines with one another, they should remember that in Catholic doctrine there exists a "hierarchy" of truths, since they vary in their relation to the fundamental Christian faith. Thus the way will be opened by which through fraternal rivalry all will be stirred to a deeper understanding and a clearer presentation of the unfathomable riches of Christ.<sup>34</sup>

12. Before the whole world let all Christians confess their faith in the triune God, one and three in the incarnate Son of God, our Redeemer and Lord. United in their efforts, and with mutual respect, let them bear witness to our common hope which does not play us false. In these days when cooperation in social matters is so widespread, all men without exception are called to work together, with much greater reason all those who believe in God, but most of all, all Christians in that they bear the name of Christ. Cooperation among Christians vividly expresses the relationship which in fact already unites them, and it sets in clearer relief the features of Christ the Servant. This cooperation, which has already begun in many countries, should be developed more and more, particularly in regions where a social and technical evolution is taking place, be it in a just evaluation of the dignity of the human person, the establishment of the blessings of peace, the application of Gospel principles to social life, the advancement of the arts and sciences in a truly Christian spirit, or also in the use of various remedies to relieve the afflictions of our times such as famine and natural disasters, illiteracy and poverty, housing shortage and the unequal distribution of wealth. All believers in Christ can, through this cooperation, be led to acquire a better knowledge and appreciation of one another, and so pave the way to Christian unity.

## **CHAPTER III**

### **CHURCHES AND ECCLESIAL COMMUNITIES SEPARATED FROM THE ROMAN APOSTOLIC SEE**

13. We now turn our attention to the two chief types of division as they affect the seamless robe of Christ.

The first divisions occurred in the East, when the dogmatic formulae of the Councils of Ephesus and Chalcedon were challenged, and later when ecclesiastical communion between the Eastern Patriarchates and the Roman See was dissolved.

Other divisions arose more than four centuries later in the West, stemming from the events which are usually referred to as "The Reformation." As a result, many Communions, national or confessional, were separated from the Roman See. Among those in which Catholic traditions and institutions in part continue to exist, the Anglican Communion occupies a special place.

These various divisions differ greatly from one another not only by reason of their origin, place and time, but especially in the nature and seriousness of questions bearing on faith and the structure of the Church. Therefore, without minimizing the differences between the various Christian bodies, and without overlooking the bonds between them which exist in spite of divisions, this holy Council decides to propose the following considerations for prudent ecumenical action.

## I. The Special Consideration of the Eastern Churches

14. For many centuries the Church of the East and that of the West each followed their separate ways though linked in a brotherly union of faith and sacramental life; the Roman See by common consent acted as guide when disagreements arose between them over matters of faith or discipline. Among other matters of great importance, it is a pleasure for this Council to remind everyone that there flourish in the East many particular or local Churches, among which the Patriarchal Churches hold first place, and of these not a few pride themselves in tracing their origins back to the apostles themselves. Hence a matter of primary concern and care among the Easterns, in their local churches, has been, and still is, to preserve the family ties of common faith and charity which ought to exist between sister Churches.

Similarly it must not be forgotten that from the beginning the Churches of the East have had a treasury from which the Western Church has drawn extensively — in liturgical practice, spiritual tradition, and law. Nor must we undervalue the fact that it was the ecumenical Councils held in the East that defined the basic dogmas of the Christian faith, on the Trinity and on the Word of God Who took flesh of the Virgin Mary. To preserve this faith these Churches have suffered and still suffer much.

However, the heritage handed down by the apostles was received with differences of form and manner, so that from the earliest times of the Church it was explained variously in different places, owing to diversities of genius and conditions of life. All this, quite apart from external causes, prepared the way for divisions arising also from a lack of charity and mutual understanding.

For this reason the Holy Council urges all, but especially those who intend to devote themselves to the restoration of full communion hoped for between the Churches of the East and the Catholic Church, to give due consideration to this special feature of the origin and growth of the Eastern Churches, and to the character of the relations which obtained between them and the Roman See before separation. They must take full account of all these factors and, where this is done, it will greatly contribute to the dialogue that is looked for.

15. Everyone also knows with what great love the Christians of the East celebrate the sacred liturgy, especially the eucharistic celebration, source of the Church's life and pledge of future glory, in which the faithful, united with their bishop, have access to God the Father through the Son, the Word made flesh, Who suffered and has been glorified, and so, in the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, they enter into communion with the most holy Trinity, being made "sharers of the divine nature".<sup>35</sup> Hence, through the celebration of the Holy Eucharist in each of these churches, the Church of God is built up and grows in stature<sup>36</sup> and through concelebration their communion with one another is made manifest.

In this liturgical worship, the Christians of the East pay high tribute, in beautiful hymns of praise, to Mary ever Virgin, whom the ecumenical Council of Ephesus solemnly proclaimed to be the holy Mother of God, so that Christ might be acknowledged as being truly Son of God and Son of Man, according to the Scriptures. Many also are the saints whose praise they sing, among them the Fathers of the universal Church.

These Churches, although separated from us, yet possess true sacraments and above all, by apostolic succession, the priesthood and the Eucharist, whereby they are linked with us in closest intimacy. Therefore some worship in common (*communicatio in sacris*), given suitable circumstances and the approval of Church authority, is not only possible but to be encouraged.

Moreover, in the East are found the riches of those spiritual traditions which are given expression especially in monastic life. There from the glorious times of the holy Fathers, monastic spirituality flourished, which then later flowed over into the Western world, and there provided the source from which Latin monastic life took its rise and has drawn fresh vigor ever since. Catholics therefore are earnestly recommended to avail themselves of the spiritual riches of the Eastern Fathers which lift up the whole man to the contemplation of the divine.

The very rich liturgical and spiritual heritage of the Eastern Churches should be known, venerated, preserved and cherished by all. They must recognize that this is of supreme importance for the faithful preservation of the fullness of Christian tradition, and for bringing about reconciliation between Eastern and Western Christians.

16. Already from the earliest times the Eastern Churches followed their own forms of ecclesiastical law and custom, which were sanctioned by the approval of the Fathers of the Church, of synods, and even of ecumenical Councils. Far from being an obstacle to the Church's unity, a certain diversity of customs and observances only adds to her splendor, and is of great help in carrying out her mission, as has already been stated. To remove, then, all shadow of doubt, this holy Council solemnly declares that the Churches of the East, while remembering the necessary unity of the whole Church, have the power to govern themselves according to the disciplines proper to them, since these are better suited to the character of their faithful, and more for the good of their souls. The perfect observance of this traditional principle, not always indeed carried out in practice, is one of the essential prerequisites for any restoration of unity.

17. What has just been said about the lawful variety that can exist in the Church must also be taken to apply to the differences in theological expression of doctrine. In the study of revelation East and West have followed different methods, and have developed differently their understanding and confession of God's truth. It is hardly surprising then, if from time to time one tradition has come nearer to a full appreciation of some aspects of a mystery of revelation than the other, or has expressed it to better advantage. In such cases, these various theological expressions are to be considered often as mutually complementary rather than conflicting. Where the authentic theological traditions of the Eastern Church are concerned, we must recognize the admirable way in which they have their roots in Holy Scripture, and how they are nurtured and given expression in the life of the liturgy. They derive their strength too from the living tradition of the apostles and from the works of the Fathers and spiritual writers of the Eastern Churches. Thus they promote the right ordering of Christian life and, indeed, pave the way to a full vision of Christian truth.

All this heritage of spirituality and liturgy, of discipline and theology, in its various traditions, this holy synod declares to belong to the full Catholic and apostolic character of the Church. We thank God that many Eastern children of the Catholic Church, who preserve this heritage and wish to express it more faithfully and completely in their lives, are already living in full communion with their brethren who follow the tradition of the West.

18. After taking all these factors into consideration, this Sacred Council solemnly repeats the declaration of previous Councils and Roman Pontiffs, that for the restoration or the maintenance of unity and communion it is necessary "to impose no burden beyond what is essential".<sup>37</sup> It is the Council's urgent desire that, in the various organizations and living activities of the Church, every effort should be made toward the gradual realization of this unity, especially by prayer, and by fraternal dialogue on points of doctrine and the more pressing pastoral problems of



our time. Similarly, the Council commends to the shepherds and faithful of the Catholic Church to develop closer relations with those who are no longer living in the East but are far from home, so that friendly collaboration with them may increase, in the spirit of love, to the exclusion of all feeling of rivalry or strife. If this cause is wholeheartedly promoted, the Council hopes that the barrier dividing the Eastern Church and Western Church will be removed, and that at last there may be but the one dwelling, firmly established on Christ Jesus, the cornerstone, who will make both one.<sup>38</sup>

## II. *Separated Churches and Ecclesial Communities in the West*

19. In the great upheaval which began in the West toward the end of the Middle Ages, and in later times too, Churches and ecclesial Communities came to be separated from the Apostolic See of Rome. Yet they have retained a particularly close affinity with the Catholic Church as a result of the long centuries in which all Christendom lived together in ecclesiastical communion.

However, since these Churches and ecclesial Communities, on account of their different origins and different teachings in matters of doctrine on the spiritual life, vary considerably not only with us, but also among themselves, the task of describing them at all adequately is extremely difficult; and we have no intention of making such an attempt here.

Although the ecumenical movement and the desire for peace with the Catholic Church have not yet taken hold everywhere, it is our hope that ecumenical feeling and mutual esteem may gradually increase among all men.

It must however be admitted that in these Churches and ecclesial Communities there exist important differences from the Catholic Church, not only of an historical, sociological, psychological and cultural character, but especially in the interpretation of revealed truth. To make easier the ecumenical dialogue in spite of these differences, we wish to set down some considerations which can, and indeed should, serve as a basis and encouragement for such dialogue.

20. Our thoughts turn first to those Christians who make open confession of Jesus Christ as God and Lord and as the sole Mediator between God and men, to the glory of the one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. We are aware indeed that there exist considerable divergences from the doctrine of the Catholic Church concerning Christ Himself, the Word of God made flesh, the work of redemption, and consequently, concerning the mystery and ministry of the Church, and the role of Mary in the plan of salvation. But we rejoice to see that our separated brethren look to Christ as the source and center of Church unity. Their longing for union with Christ inspires them to seek an ever closer unity, and also to bear witness to their faith among the peoples of the earth.

21. A love and reverence of Sacred Scripture which might be described as devotion, leads our brethren to a constant meditative study of the sacred text. For the Gospel "is the power of God for salvation to every one who has faith, to the Jew first and then to the Greek".<sup>39</sup>

While invoking the Holy Spirit, they seek in these very Scriptures God as it were speaking to them in Christ, Whom the prophets foretold, Who is the Word of God made flesh for us. They contemplate in the Scriptures the life of Christ and what the Divine Master taught and did for our salvation, especially the mysteries of His death and resurrection.

But while the Christians who are separated from us hold the divine authority of the Sacred Books, they differ from ours — some in one way, some in another — regarding the relationship between Scripture and the Church. For, according to Catholic belief, the authentic teaching authority of the Church has a special place

in the interpretation and preaching of the written word of God.

But Sacred Scriptures provide for the work of dialogue an instrument of the highest value in the mighty hand of God for the attainment of that unity which the Saviour holds out to all.

22. Whenever the Sacrament of Baptism is duly administered as Our Lord instituted it, and is received with the right dispositions, a person is truly incorporated into the crucified and glorified Christ, and reborn to a sharing of the divine life, as the Apostle says: "You were buried together with Him in Baptism, and in Him also rose again — through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead".<sup>40</sup>

Baptism therefore establishes a sacramental bond of unity which links all who have been reborn by it. But of itself Baptism is only a beginning, an inauguration wholly directed toward the fullness of life in Christ. Baptism, therefore, envisages a complete profession of faith, complete incorporation in the system of salvation such as Christ willed it to be, and finally complete ingrafting in eucharistic communion.

Though the ecclesial Communities which are separated from us lack the fullness of unity with us flowing from Baptism, and though we believe they have not retained the proper reality of the eucharistic mystery in its fullness, especially because of the absence of the sacrament of Orders, nevertheless when they commemorate His death and resurrection in the Lord's Supper, they profess that it signifies life in communion with Christ and look forward to His coming in glory. Therefore the teaching concerning the Lord's Supper, the other sacraments, worship, the ministry of the Church, must be the subject of the dialogue.

23. The daily Christian life of these brethren is nourished by their faith in Christ and strengthened by the grace of Baptism and by hearing the word of God. This shows itself in their private prayer, their meditation on the Bible, in their Christian family life, and in the worship of a community gathered together to praise God. Moreover, their form of worship sometimes displays notable features of the liturgy which they shared with us of old.

Their faith in Christ bears fruit in praise and thanksgiving for the blessings received from the hands of God. Among them, too, is a strong sense of justice and a true charity toward their neighbor. This active faith has been responsible for many organizations for the relief of spiritual and material distress, the furtherance of the education of youth, the improvement of the social conditions of life, and the promotion of peace throughout the world.

While it is true that many Christians understand the moral teaching of the Gospel differently from Catholics, and do not accept the same solutions to the more difficult problems of modern society, nevertheless they share our desire to stand by the words of Christ as the source of Christian virtue, and to obey the command of the Apostle: "And whatever you do, in word or in work, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, giving thanks to God the Father through Him".<sup>41</sup> For that reason an ecumenical dialogue might start with discussion of the application of the Gospel to moral conduct.

24. Now that we have briefly set out the conditions for ecumenical action and the principles by which it is to be directed, we look with confidence to the future. This Sacred Council exhorts the faithful to refrain from superficiality and imprudent zeal, which can hinder real progress toward unity. Their ecumenical action must be fully and sincerely Catholic, that is to say, faithful to the truth which we have received from the apostles and Fathers of the Church, in harmony with the faith which the Catholic Church has always professed, and at the same time directed

toward that fullness to which Our Lord wills His Body to grow in the course of time.

It is the urgent wish of this Holy Council that the measures undertaken by the sons of the Catholic Church should develop in conjunction with those of our separated brethren so that no obstacle be put in the ways of divine Providence and no preconceived judgments impair the future inspirations of the Holy Spirit. The Council moreover professes its awareness that human powers and capacities cannot achieve this holy objective — the reconciling of all Christians in the unity of the one and only Church of Christ. It is because of this that the Council rests all its hope on the prayer of Christ for the Church, on our Father's love for us, and on the power of the Holy Spirit. "And hope does not disappoint, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us".<sup>42</sup>

Each and all these matters which are set forth in this Decree have been favorably voted on by the Fathers of the Council. And We, by the apostolic authority given Us by Christ and in union with the Fathers, approve, decree and establish them in the Holy Spirit and command that they be promulgated for the glory of God.

Given in Rome at St. Peter's, November 21, 1964

Paul Pp. VI

This unofficial translation is based on the Latin text appearing in *L'Osservatore Romano*, November 28, 1964. Reprinted by permission of the National Catholic Welfare Conference.

- <sup>1</sup> Cf. 1 Cor. 1, 13.
- <sup>2</sup> Cf. 1 Jn. 4, 9; Col. 1, 18-20; Jn. 11, 52.
- <sup>3</sup> Jn. 17, 21.
- <sup>4</sup> Cf. Jn. 13, 34.
- <sup>5</sup> Cf. Jn. 16, 7.
- <sup>6</sup> Eph. 4, 4-5.
- <sup>7</sup> Gal. 3, 27-28.
- <sup>8</sup> Cf. 1 Cor. 12, 4-11.
- <sup>9</sup> Eph. 4, 12.
- <sup>10</sup> Cf. Mt. 28, 18-20, collato Jn. 20, 21-23.
- <sup>11</sup> Cf. Mt. 16, 18, collato Mt. 18, 18.
- <sup>12</sup> Cf. Lc. 22, 32.
- <sup>13</sup> Cf. Jn. 21, 15-18.
- <sup>14</sup> Cf. Eph. 2, 20.
- <sup>15</sup> Cf. 1 Petr. 2, 25; CONC. VATICANUM I, Sess. IV (1870), Constitutio *Pastor Aeternus*: Collac 7, 482 a.
- <sup>16</sup> Cf. Is. 11, 10-12.
- <sup>17</sup> Cf. Eph. 2, 17-18, collato Mc. 16, 15.
- <sup>18</sup> Cf. 1 Petr. 1, 3-9.
- <sup>19</sup> Cf. 1 Cor. 11, 18-19; Gal. 1, 6-9; 1 Jn. 2, 18-19.
- <sup>20</sup> Cf. 1 Cor. 1, 11 sqq; 11, 22.
- <sup>21</sup> Cf. CONC. FLORENTINUM, Sess. VIII (1439), Decretum *Exultate Deo*: Mansi 31, 1055 A.
- <sup>22</sup> Cf. S. AUGUSTINUS, *In Ps. 32, Enarr. II*, 29: PL 36, 299.
- <sup>23</sup> Cf. CONC. LATERANENSE IV (1215) Constitutio IV: Mansi 22, 990; CONC. LUGDUNENSE II (1274), Professio fidei Michaelis Palaeologi: Mansi 24, 71 E; CONC. FLORENTINUM, Sess. VI (1439), Definitio *Laetentur caeli*: Mansi 31, 1026 E.
- <sup>24</sup> Cf. Iac. 1, 4; Rom. 12, 1-2.
- <sup>25</sup> Cf. 2 Cor. 4, 10; Phil. 2, 5-8.
- <sup>26</sup> Cf. Eph. 5, 27.
- <sup>27</sup> Cf. CONC. LATERANENSE V, Sess. XII (1517), Constitutio *Constituti*: Mansi 32, 988 B-C.
- <sup>28</sup> Cf. Eph. 4, 24.
- <sup>29</sup> Eph. 4, 1-3.
- <sup>30</sup> Mt. 20, 28.
- <sup>31</sup> 1 Jn. 1, 10.
- <sup>32</sup> Jn. 17, 21.
- <sup>33</sup> Mt. 18, 20.
- <sup>34</sup> Cf. Eph. 3, 8.
- <sup>35</sup> 2 Petr. 1, 4.
- <sup>36</sup> Cf. S. IOANNES CHRYSOSTOMOS, *In Ioannem Homelia XLVI*, PG 59, 260-262.
- <sup>37</sup> Acts 15, 28.
- <sup>38</sup> Cf. CONC. FLORENTINUM, Sess. VI (1439), Definitio *Laetentur caeli*: Mansi 31 1026 E.
- <sup>39</sup> Rom. 1, 16.
- <sup>40</sup> Col. 2, 12; cf. Rom. 6, 4.
- <sup>41</sup> Col. 3, 17.
- <sup>42</sup> Rom. 5, 5.

## RECOMMENDED READING

*Blueprints for Action*, National Council of Catholic Men and National Council of Catholic Women, NCWC, Washington, D.C., 1966. This is a segment of the kit on "Grass-roots Ecumenism." It is designed to serve as a blueprint for action in the planning of interreligious projects for the parish, community, and school.

Cranny, Titus, S.A., *Father Paul, Apostle of Unity*, Graymoor Press, Peekskill, N. Y., 1965. This is a brief study of the unity vocation of Father Paul James Francis, S.A., founder of the Society of the Atonement and originator of the Unity Octave.

Cranny, Titus, S.A., compiler and ed., *Pope Paul and Christian Unity*, Graymoor Press, Peekskill, N. Y., 1965. This collection presents the words of Pope Paul VI during the second year of his pontificate on topics dealing directly with Christian unity.

Greenspun, William B., C.S.P., *CCD Apostolate of Good Will*, Confraternity Publications, Paterson, N. J., 1963. This is a handbook for the training of Confraternity of Christian Doctrine Apostles of Good Will.

Greenspun, William B., C.S.P., and Norgren, William A., eds., *Living Room Dialogues*, Paulist Press, Glen Rock, N. J., 1965. This paperback is designed to be a guide for discussion by Catholic, Orthodox, and Protestant laity.

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